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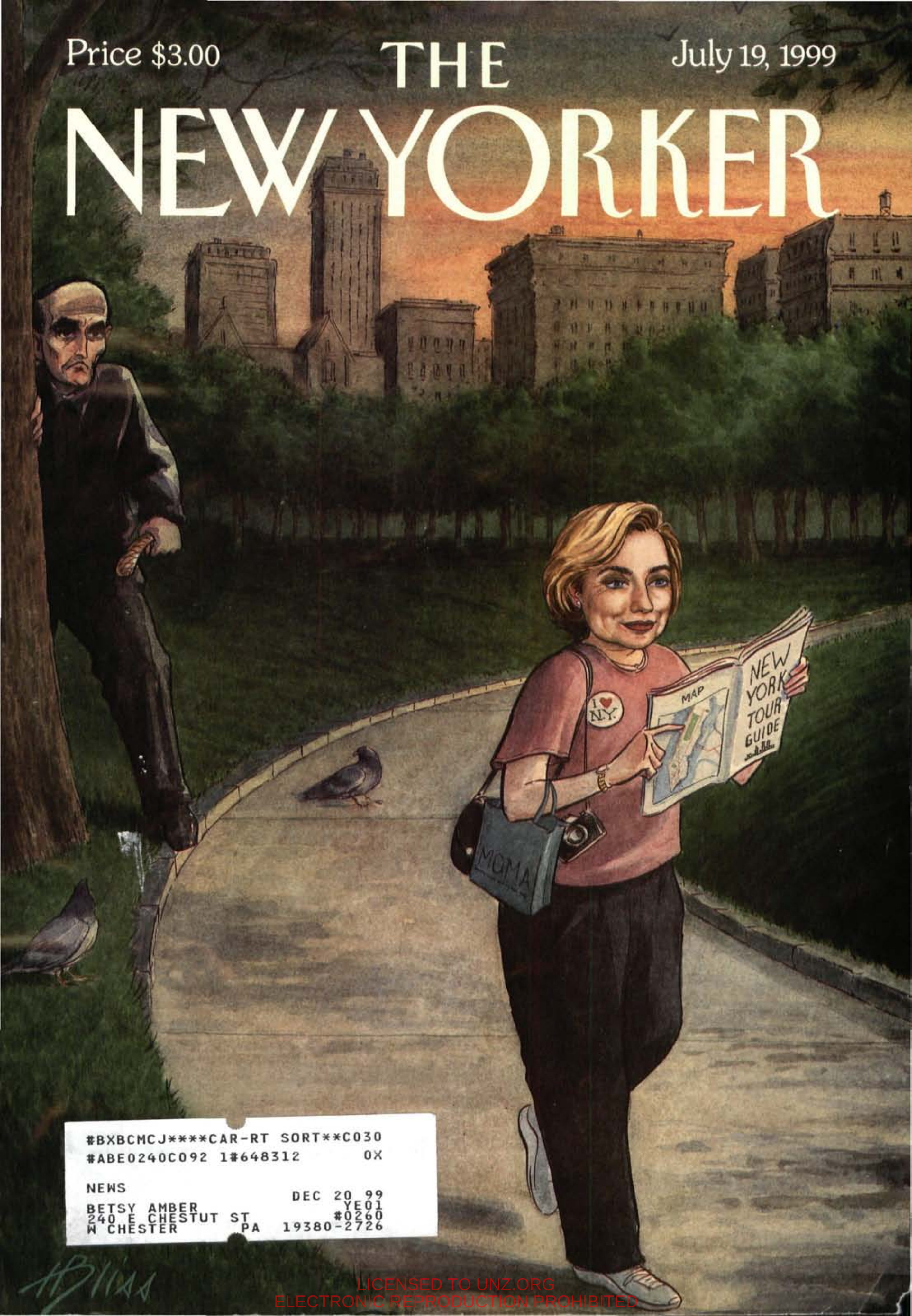
THE NEW YORKER

July 19, 1999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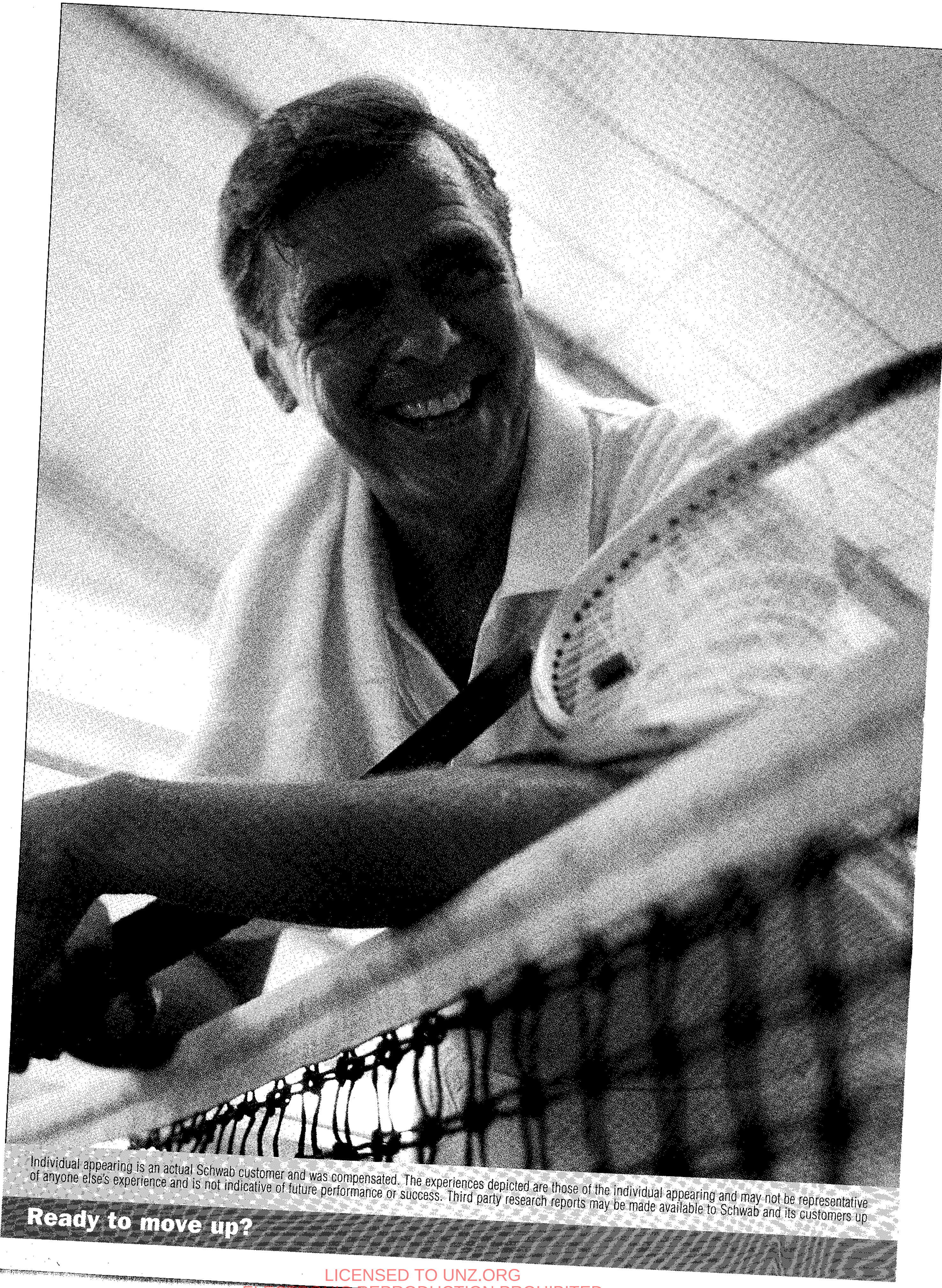

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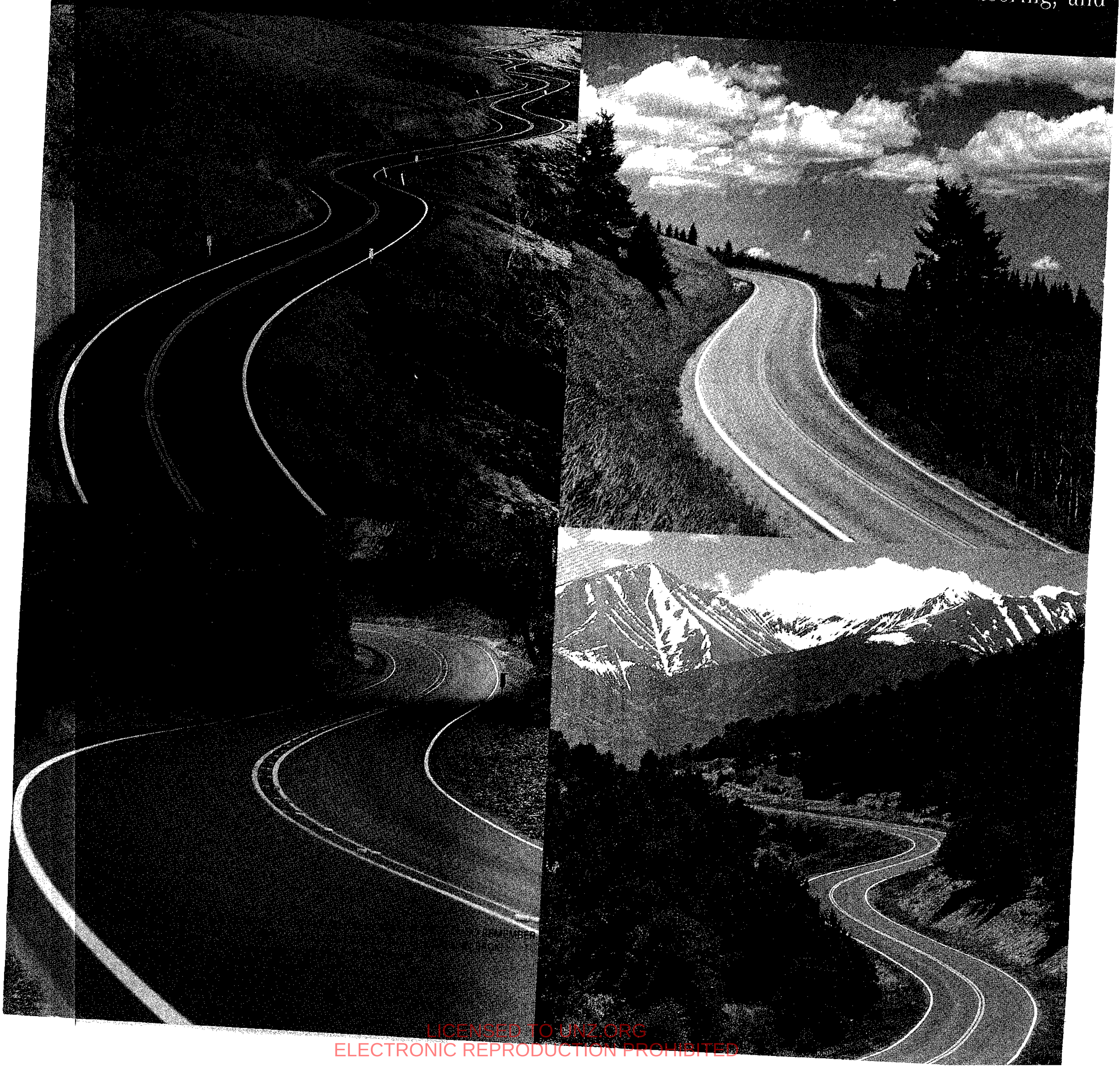

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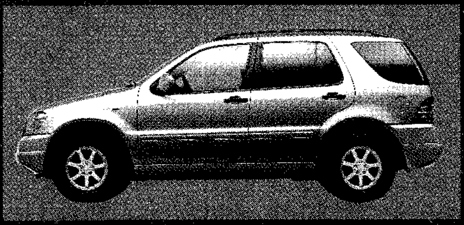

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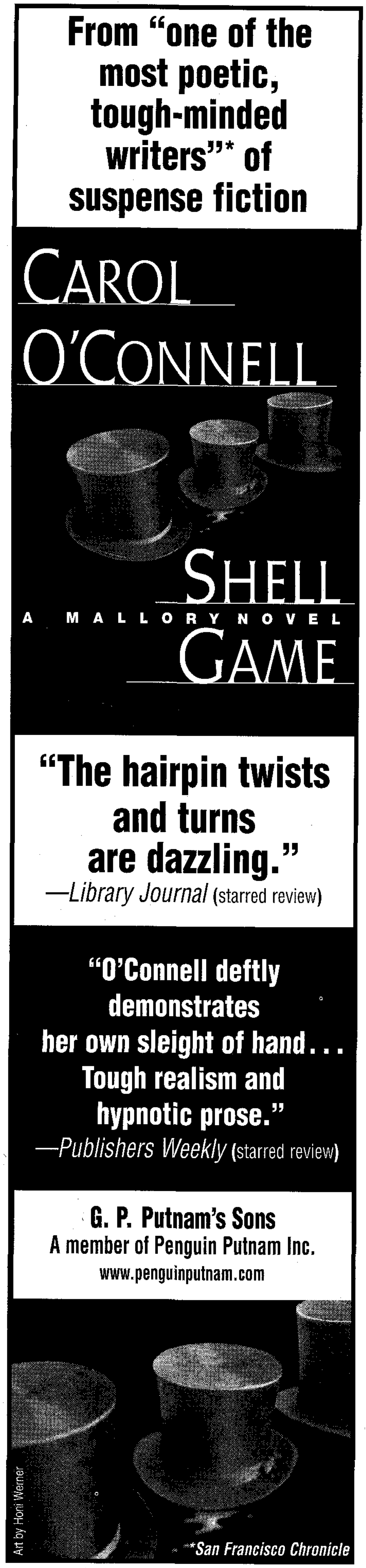

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*San Francisco Chronicle

THE NEW YORKER

JULY 19, 1999

THE MAIL 8

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 10

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 29
Comment Adam Gopnik on the day of the dolphin.
Et cetera A South Park symphony; hotter than Heaven; see Hillary listen.

DEPARTMENTS

The Political Scene Cuomo's Mojo . . . . *Elizabeth Kolbert* 34
How far can a liberal like Andrew Cuomo go?

Shouts & Murmurs The Y3K Bug . . . . *Steve Martin* 40

Annals of Education The Million-Dollar Diploma . . . . . *James Atlas* 42
The Harvard Business School struggles to remain worth it in the era of instant high-tech fortunes.

PROFILE The Sultan of Stuff . . . . *David Owen* 52
How Alex Shear, a man with a bizarre obsession with things no one else wanted, became a pop hero.

PORTFOLIO Exile and Return . . . . *Gilles Peress* 64
Text by Philip Gourevitch.

FICTION "The Hofzinser Club" . . . . *Michael Chabon* 78
The making of an escape artist.

THE CRITICS

Onward and Upward with the Arts

David Smith at Storm King . . . . *Calvin Tomkins* 86
The Theatre The Berliner Ensemble's final curtain . . . . . *John Lahr* 88
The Art World Gustave Moreau at the Met . . . . . . *Peter Schjeldahl* 90
Reputations Randall Jarrell's consummate criticism . . . . *Adam Gopnik* 92
Books Briefly Noted 97
The Current Cinema "Arlington Road," "The Lovers on the Bridge" . . . . . *Anthony Lane* 98

POEMS

"The Brother" . . . . *Michael Donaghy* 47
"Une Vie Sans Ailleurs" . . . . *Breyten Breytenbach* 60

CROSSWORD 8 x 10 Cryptic No. 96 99

THE BACK PAGE Chutes . . . . *Roz Chast* 100

COVER *The Tough Guy and the Tourist, by Harry Bliss*

DRAWINGS *Christopher Weyant, Jack Ziegler, Mick Stevens, Nick Downes, Paul Karasik, Edward Koren, Leo Cullum, David Sipress, Michael Maslin, Robert Weber, Danny Shanahan, Michael Crawford, George Booth, Lee Lorenz, Peter Steiner, Bruce Eric Kaplan*

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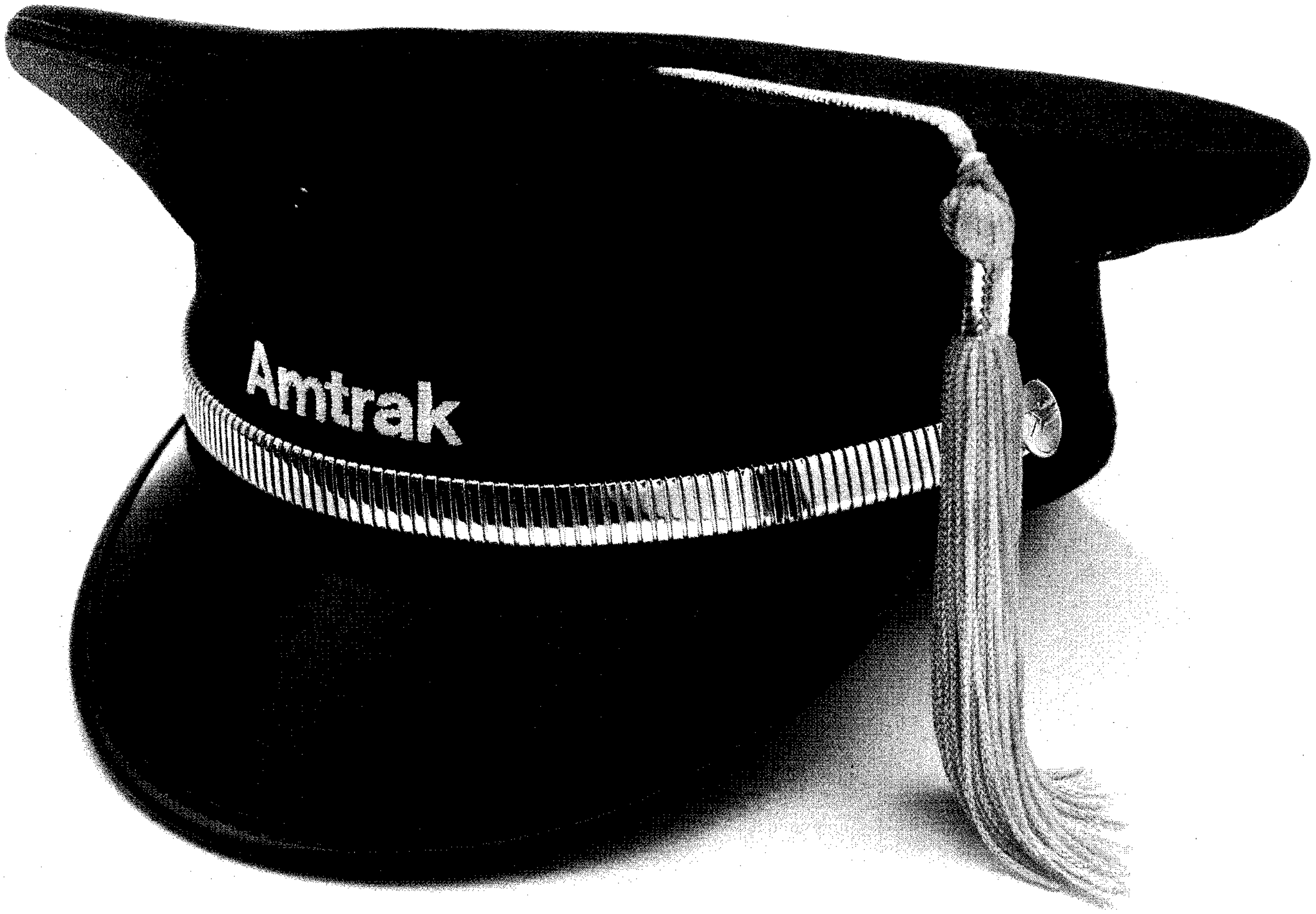

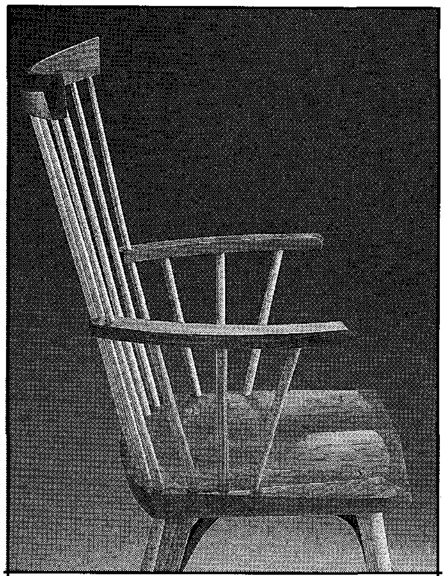

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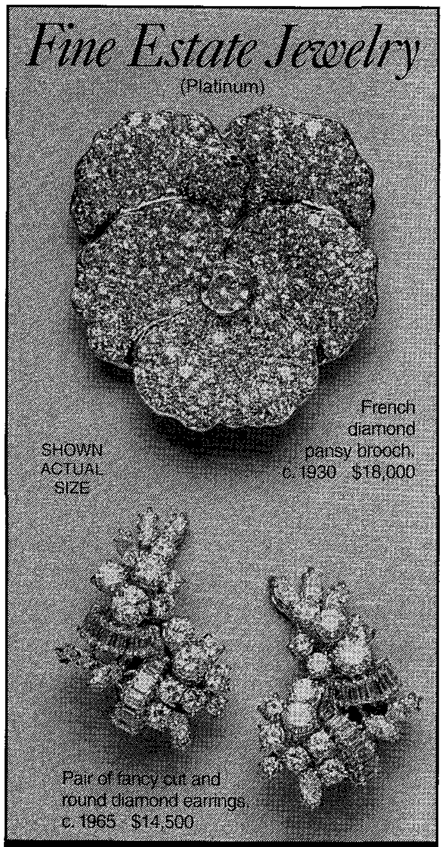

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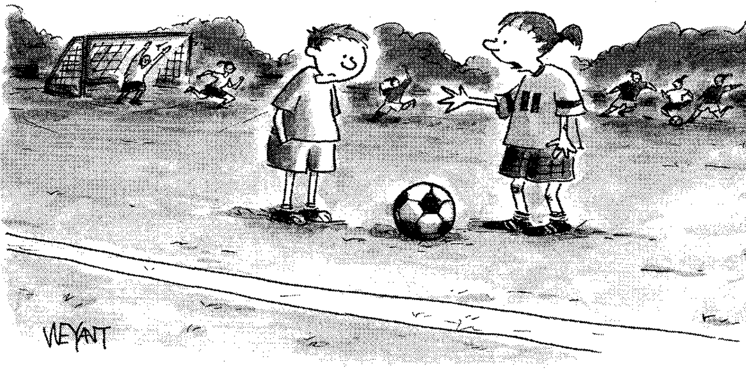

"Jason, I'd like to let you play, but soccer is a girls' game."

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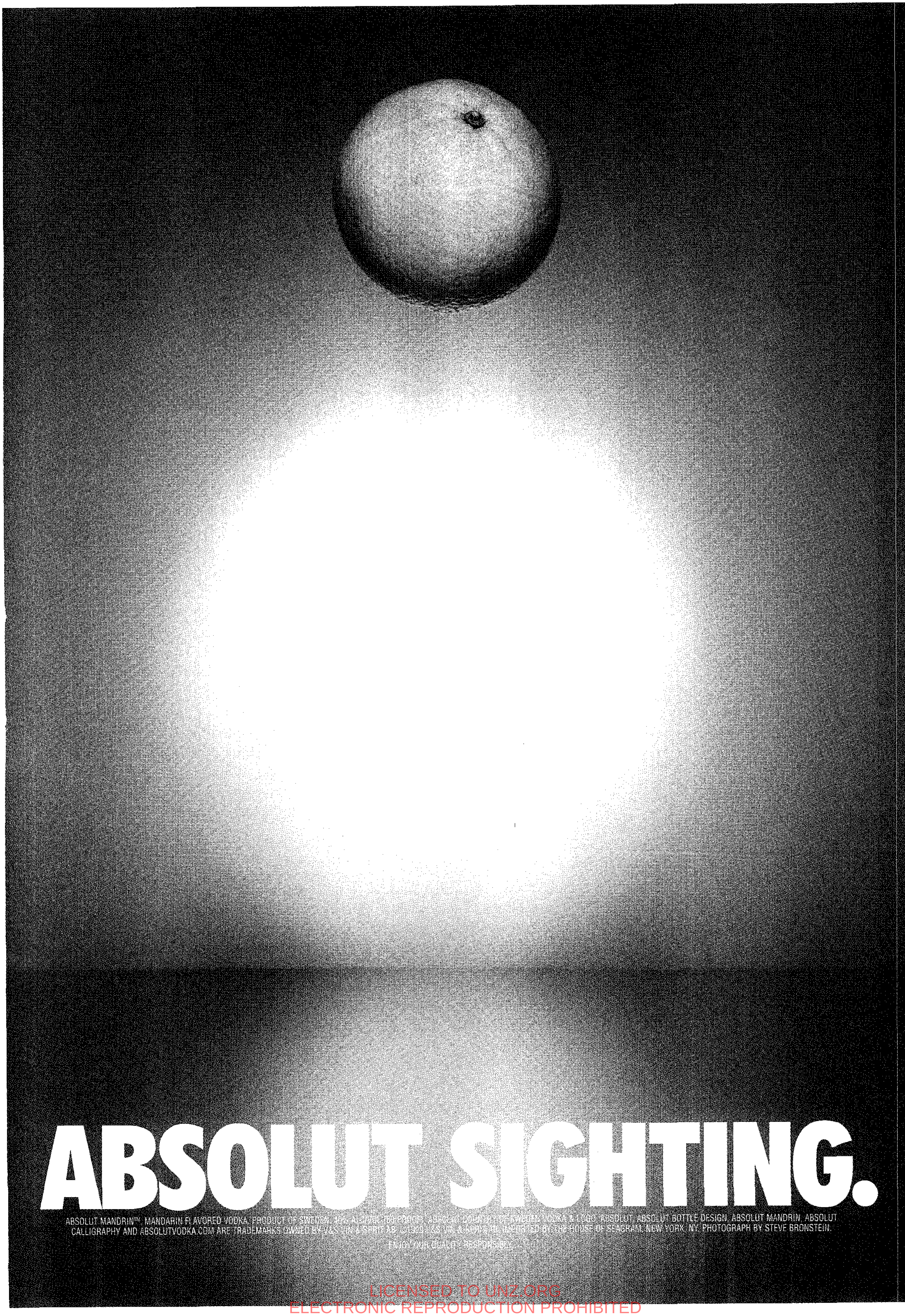

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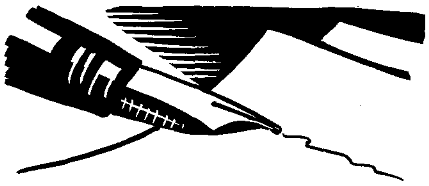

THE HOLOCAUST'S LEGACIES

In his article on Edith Stein, the Holocaust, and the Catholic Church (Annals of Religion, June 7th), James Carroll asked, "What is a Jew?" Edith Stein was arrested as a Jew, but at that time and at the time of her death she was a professed Christian. Whether or not she felt sympathy, solidarity, or even identity with her former coreligionists is beside the point. To maintain that she was Jewish is to endorse the Nazi position that a Jew is a member of a race, not of a religion, and thus deny the human conscience its choices. That some Jews insist on Stein's Jewishness in the face of her Carmelite habit is deeply ironic.

Of course, this irony does not excuse the Catholic Church from its long history of explicit anti-Semitism or its craven acquiescence in Nazi terror and genocide. All Christians—both past and present—have an obligation to act as bravely as "the Jew Jesus of Nazareth" would have acted, and to accept the temporal consequences.

WILLIAM W. HUNT
Austin, Tex.

Mr. Carroll ends his article by writing, "The true epiphany of Edith Stein's story is that, in a visceral rejection of Christian theology, she refused to see the Jews as disadvantaged before God." Although many would like to believe otherwise, Catholic theology, in my view, does not see the Jewish people as "disadvantaged before God"; to take one example, Catholic liturgy includes references to the Jewish people as God's first vehicle to reveal himself to the world. Carroll also writes of Stein's disavowal of the "distinction between baptized and non-baptized Jews." This was less a theological statement and more a position on basic human rights: Stein saw no reason that anybody should be executed because of who he is, and did not think that her baptism as a Christian gave her a greater claim on legal protection than she had had before her conversion. Certainly she was not rejecting the importance of the sacraments or of her Catholic faith: otherwise, why would she have identified herself as a Christian, even in Auschwitz?

CHRISTOPHER W. FRANZ
Staten Island, N.Y.

Philip Gourevitch's article on Binjamin Wilkomirski and his memoir "Fragments" ("The Memory Thief," June 14th) reveals much about the Holocaust industry. In 1996, Suhrkamp, also Wilkomirski's publisher, published a German translation of my account of a wartime childhood in Poland. It is entitled "Dobryd"—an anagram of the name of the real town where the action takes place. I chose to write it as fiction, because, like Aharon Appelfeld, I did not trust the factual accuracy of my recollections. At the time of publication, it was suggested to me that the book would sell much better if it was reclassified as nonfiction, but I did not accept the suggestion. Though the book has received excellent critical notices, it has never enjoyed the attention given to "Fragments."

Wilkomirski's success in impersonating a Holocaust survivor confirms my suspicions about the increasingly rapacious nature of the Holocaust industry—a highly profitable enterprise, be it in tourism or in any of the arts. The steadily expanding business of merchandising dead Jews requires a constant flow of new ideas, new imagery—hence the frisson of appreciation for the bloody rat emerging from the dead woman's womb. Wilkomirski may have created a new genre, which could attract other practitioners: impersonators more real than the real thing, who thrive as devoted fetishists of suffering.

ANN CHARNEY
Montreal, Canada

•

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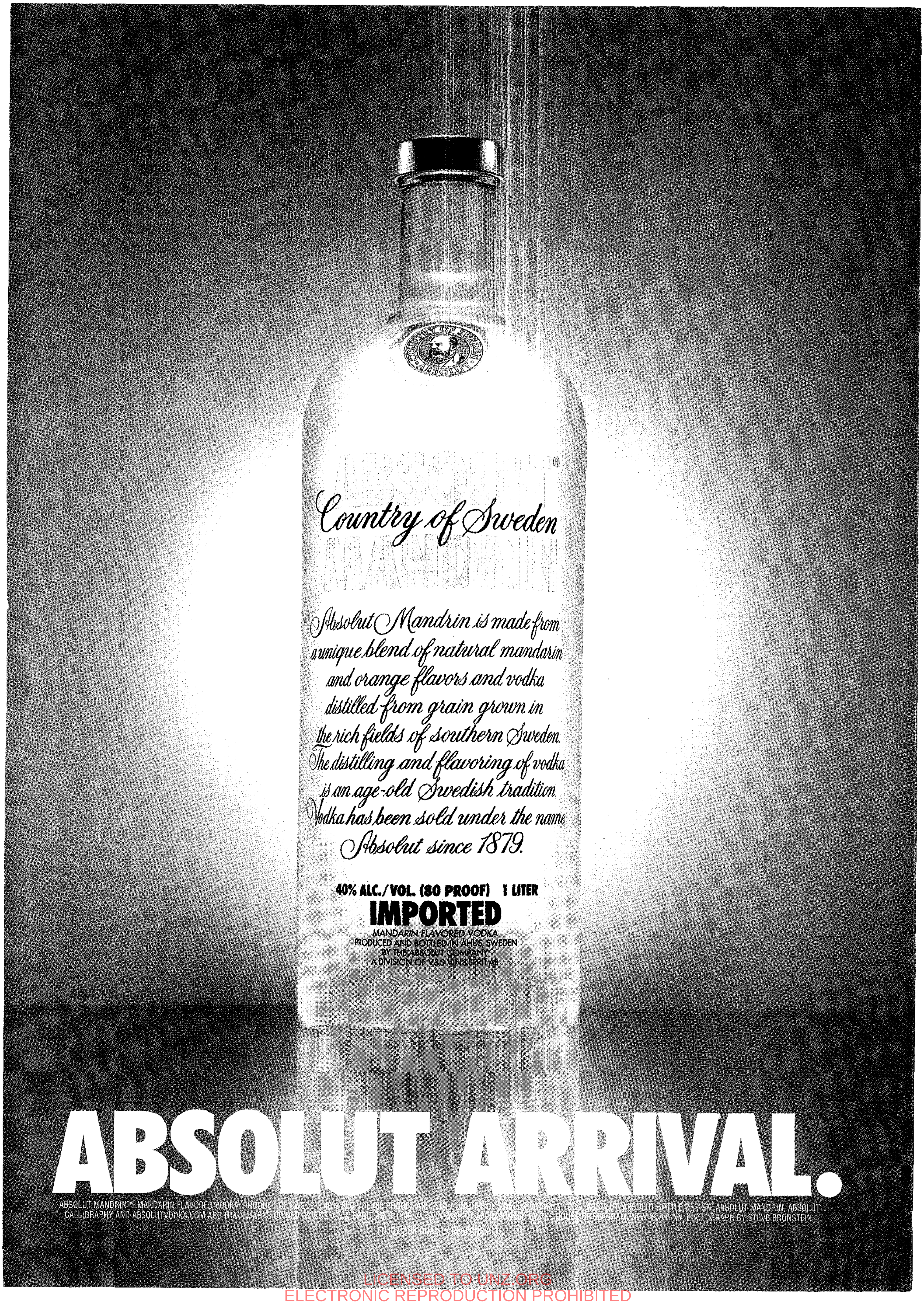
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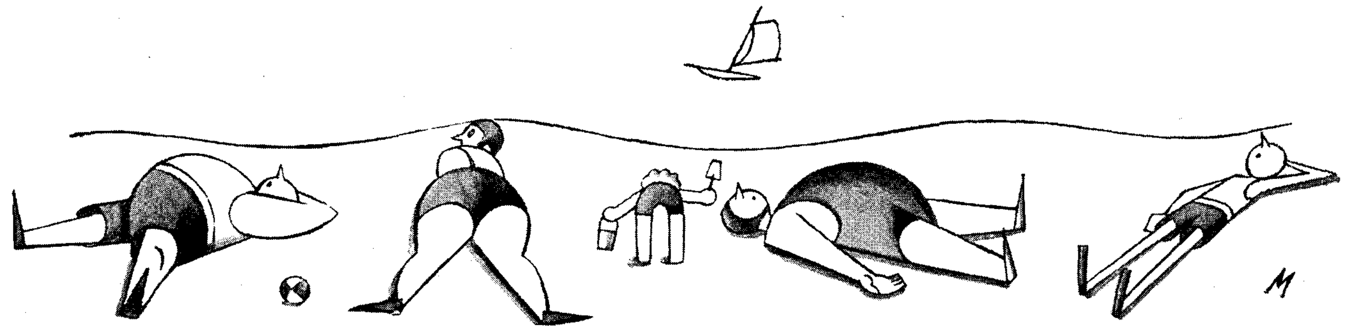

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

After the Fair—The York Theatre Company presents a musical based on the Thomas Hardy story "On the Western Circuit," with book and lyrics by Stephen Cole and music by Matthew Ward. Two previews on July 14. Opens July 15 at 8. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200.)

Dear Liar—Marian Seldes and Donal Donnelly portray Mrs. Patrick Campbell and George Bernard Shaw, in a drama that Jerome Kilty based on letters written during the actress and the playwright's forty-year clandestine love affair. Previews begin July 16. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

A Good Swift Kick—A comic revue of twenty-odd songs by John Forster, on such topics as Thomas Jefferson's DNA and cultural imperialism. David Naughton is in the cast. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Amy's View—Dame Judi Dench is an amazing actress, but can she keep you in your seat for the duration of another one of David Hare's pompous plays? (Just barely.) This one claims to be about the tangled relationship between an actress from theatre's golden age and her modern daughter, who marries an arbiter of pop culture, but it's really about Hare's out-of-touch ideas regarding how today's audiences view theatre—meaning him. Directed by Richard Eyre. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes July 18.)

Annie Get Your Gun—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Automatic Earth—From 3-Legged Dog, a multimedia work written by Kevin Cunningham, in which a man with a brain injury explores the American landscape as a hurricane heads his way. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 645-0374.)

Bash—Neil LaBute's three beautifully written, cunningly constructed monologues pack a fierce punch, rivalling the work of O'Neill in their unswerving gaze on dark truths. The excellent cast (Calista Flockhart, Ron Eldard, Paul Rudd) is put through the wringer under the slick direction of Joe Mantello, in an extraordinary evening of trenchant theatre. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes July 24.)

Benten Kozo—Traditional Kabuki meets Jackie Chan in a terrific evening concocted by director Jim Simpson and his Bat Theatre Company. The work is based on Kawatake Mokuami's nineteenth-century play involving a princess, her missing fiancé, a master thief, and a priceless incense box; the company's hip updating of the script, along with Moe Schell's clever costumes, creates an ironic, funny, energetic production that (like many of the company's offerings in the past year) is well worth a trek to Tribeca. The show runs in repertory with Erin Courtney's dark comedy, "Mother's Couch," which is performed Fridays and Saturdays at 11 P.M. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051. Closes Aug. 8.)

Brian Friel Festival—July 14 and July 17 at 2 and 8, July 15-16 at 8, and July 18 at 3: "The Freedom of the City," performed by Dublin's Abbey Theatre. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St.) . . . ¶ July 14-16 at 8, July 17 at 2 and 8, and July 18 at 3: The Irish playwright's adaptation of "Uncle Vanya," performed by Dublin's Gate Theatre. (LaGuardia Drama Theatre, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St.) . . . ¶ July 20 at 8: "The Aristocrats," performed by the Gate Theatre. Continues through July 25. (LaGuardia Drama Theatre.) (For information about tickets, call 875-5030.)

Closer—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/5/99.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Death of a Salesman—The casting of this production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

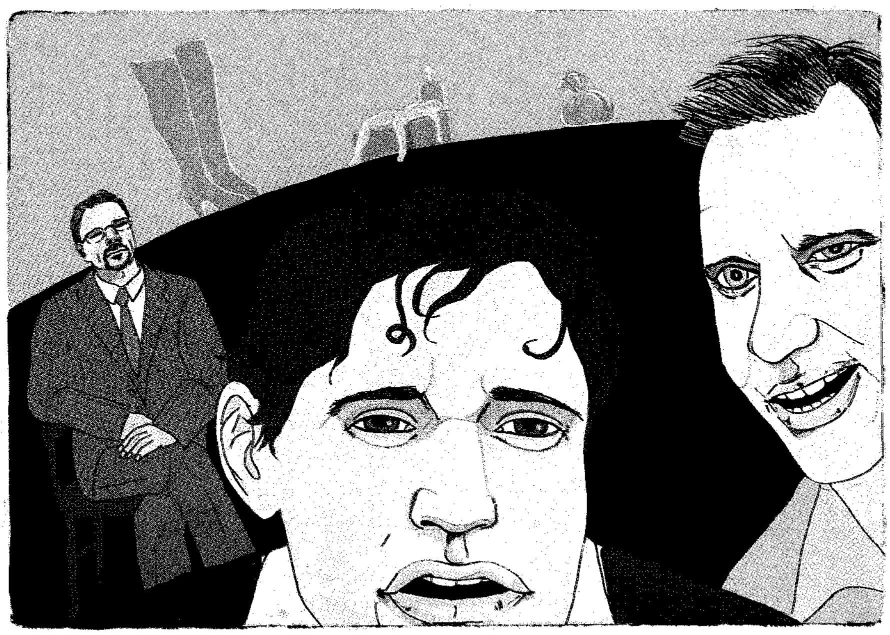
Emerging Artist Series—The second production in a new Performing Garage festival is "Radiant Pig," a collaboration between the "country mystic folk-art" band of the same name, the Larval Trading Company, and other performers and musicians. July 15-18 at 8. The series continues through July 25. (33 Wooster St. 966-3651.)

Fosse—This steamy revue of works by the choreographer Bob Fosse doesn't reveal anything new about the man behind the dances, but it does remind us why we won't be forgetting him anytime soon. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Gathering—A Shabbat dinner set during the spring of Reagan's controversial visit to Bitburg (the German cemetery where it is believed Nazi soldiers are buried) turns into political crossfire between a reformed father (Robert Fass) who writes speeches for the President and a grandfather (Theodore Bikel) who survived Dachau. It could have been a sombre, if not overly burdened, affair, but when Jesse Adam Eisenberg, who plays a precocious pre-teen about to be bar mitzvahed, skids onto the stage, his sputtering energy ricochets off his grandfather's august cynicism and sets the tone of the first act. The mood slows to a more ponderous pace in the second, and while the playwright, Arje Shaw, manages to slip some surprising wrinkles into familar Holocaust debate, one misses the comic relief of the tightly scripted first act, which includes a heated argument about bar-mitzvah ice swans. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 239-6200.)

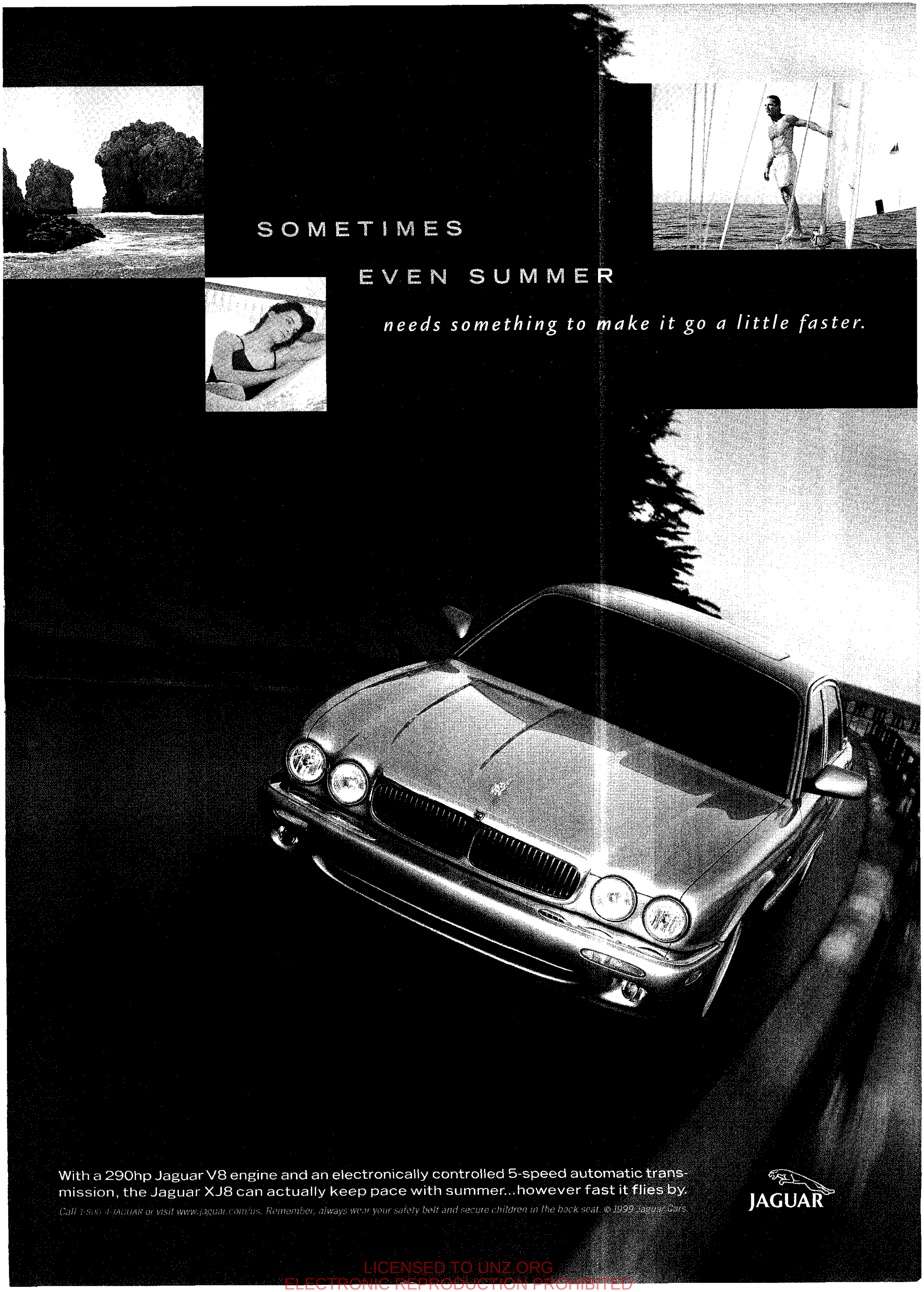
Goodbye My Friduchita—Priscilla Lopez portrays the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, in a drama by Dolores C. Sendler. (The Directors Company, 311 W. 43rd St. 712-7458.)

Hurrah at Last—The main character of Richard Greenberg's latest play is a whiny, money-obsessed novelist called Laurie (Peter Frechette), and he is clever (has



"*This Lime Tree Bower,*" *by Conor McPherson, at Primary Stages.*

LARA TOMLIN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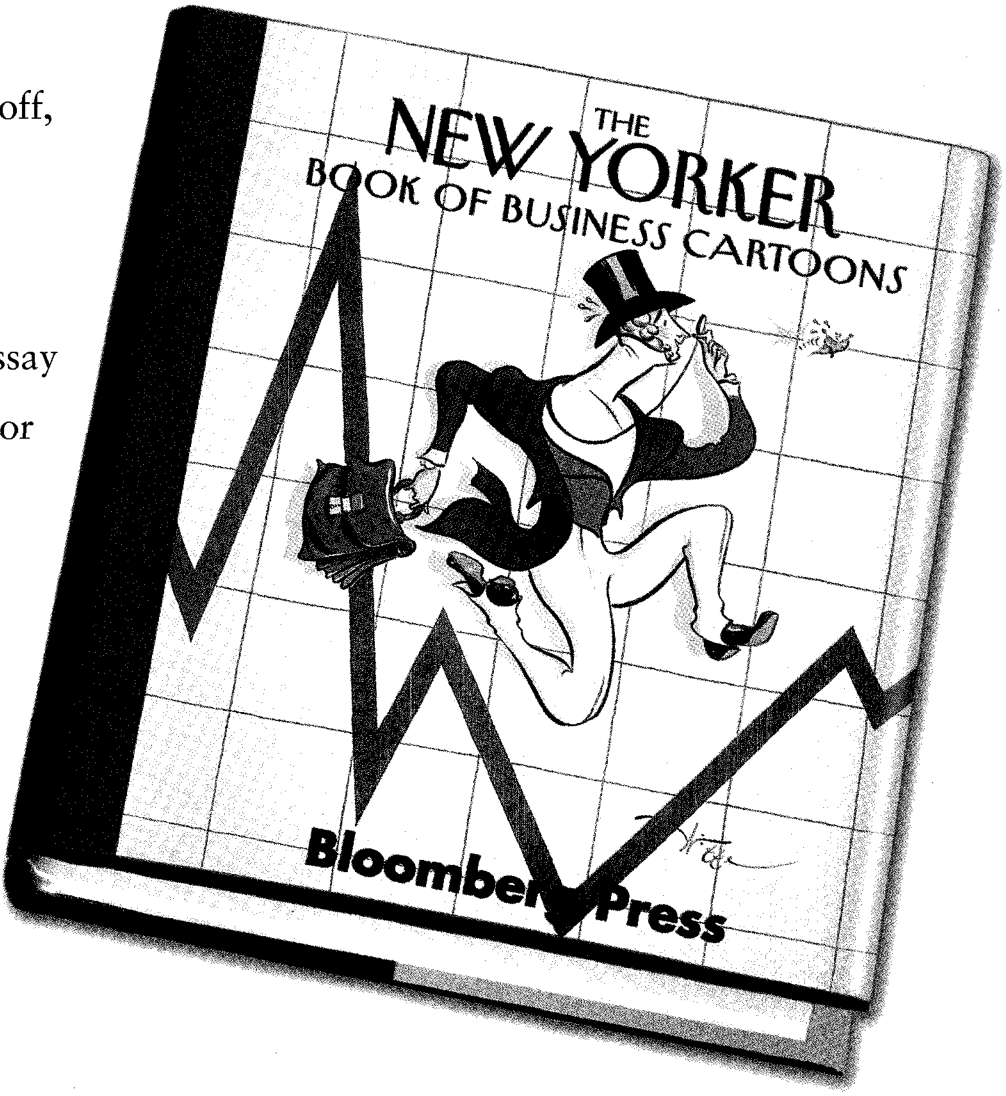
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Greenberg ever created a main character who is not?) without being compelling. It doesn't help matters that he has a bad cold all through the first act and is even sicker in the second act, most of which takes place while he's stuck in a hospital bed. Laurie's fevered perceptions are rarely revelatory, and a remark he makes about being in the hospital describes all too well the over-all effect of the play itself: "There's this general feeling of profundity, but it never turns into anything specifically interesting." Directed by David Warren. A Roundabout staging. (6/14/99) (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 719-1300.)

The Iceman Cometh—Eugene O'Neill's despairing, four-and-a-half-hour drama about a barroom full of losers. This beautiful production is a rare opportunity to see a fully realized staging of a masterpiece by America's first great playwright. It has countless rewards, not the least of which is an outstanding ensemble cast that Kevin Spacey, in a brilliant turn as the crazily optimistic salesman Hickey, leads in a way that lights up all the other performances rather than overshadowing them. Howard Davies is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100. Closes July 17.)

If Love Were All—Twiggy and Harry Groener star as Gertrude Lawrence and Noël Coward, in this appealing revue-cum-reminiscence by Sheridan Morley; the pair sing some twenty Coward songs and portray, with sweetness and without sentimentality, the remarkable lifelong friendship between the two, who met when Noël was twelve and Gertie fourteen. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

I'm the One That I Want—The comedian Margaret Cho tells the story of her disastrous descent into Hollywood, as the first Asian-American to have her own sitcom. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 307-4100.)

In Dahomey—Shirley Verrett stars in the 1903 musical by Will Marion Cook and Will Vodery, one of the first Broadway shows written and produced by black artists. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 353-1176.)

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues—A marvellous collection of songs performed by a dynamic cast. The music alone could have showcased the influence of the blues, but instead the audience is subjected to explanatory notes and bad-talk-show banter. Fortunately, the blues triumphantly survives even this. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Joy Luck Club—Susan Kim's adaptation of the Amy Tan novel, staged by the Pan Asian Rep. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Macbeth—Free outdoor Shakespeare, from the Gorilla Rep, opening its tenth-anniversary season with performances at the Cloisters. (Fort Tryon Park. For information, call 330-8086. Closes July 18.)

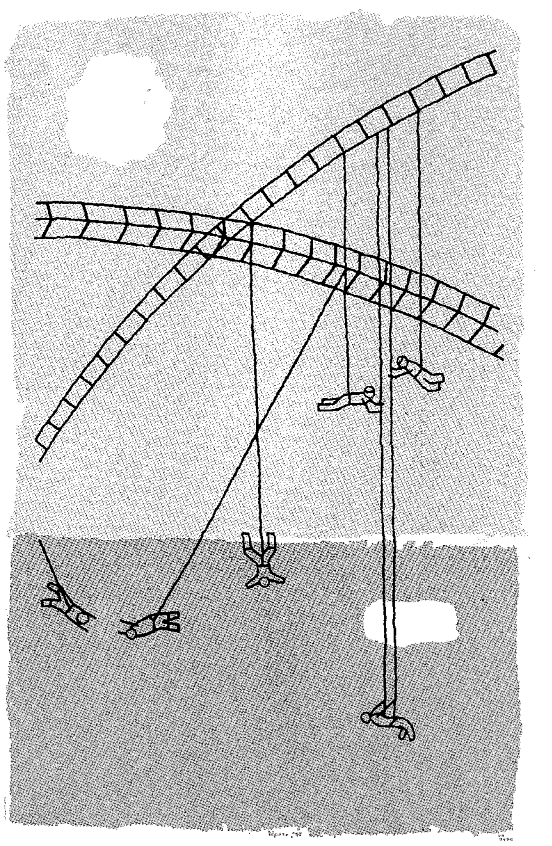
Macbeth—The Classical Theatre of Harlem's version, also performed outdoors. (Harlem School of the Arts Courtyard, St. Nicholas Ave. at 141st St. 539-8828. Closes Aug. 1.)

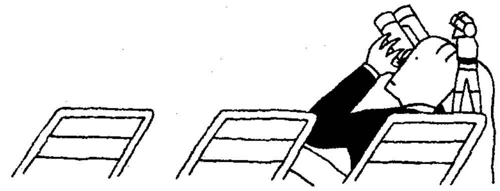
A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Shakespeare Project's rambunctious production, playing in parks around the city, makes for a delightful summer evening. In a neat conceptual twist, the fairies are puppets (created by Ralph Lee, of the Village Halloween Parade) manipulated by the actors; the technical strains of acting while puppeteering do show at times, and the cast is mixed, but it's hard to quibble in the face of so much fun. Ben Lipitz, as Bottom, and Brian Tom O'Connor, doubling as an Athenian noble and as a mechanical, are particularly good. Directed with wit and economy by Scott Cargle. (For information about dates and locations, call 946-1869.)

Peter Pan—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby stars in a limited engagement of the 1954 musical. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Richard III—Shakespeare in the Park(ing Lot), from Expanded Arts. (Municipal Parking Lot at Broome and Ludlow Sts. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 253-1813. Closes Aug. 7.)

Small Craft Warning—David Greenspan leads the cast of the Worth Street Theatre's production of Tennessee Williams's 1972 drama. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St., at West Broadway. 604-4195. Closes July 26.)





"Kayassine," the aerial choreography of Les Arts Sauts, at Lincoln Center (see Dance).

LAURENT CILLUFFO

Snakebit—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy-drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer jokes, more "issues"). (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

La Terrasse—An agonizingly airless comedy by Jean-Claude Carrière (the translation is by Mark O'Donnell). A couple is splitting up and is vacating their Paris apartment; before they depart, a real-estate agent shows the place to several prospective tenants, and, oh, what noncomedic high jinks ensue! Mike Ockrent's direction is like *mélasse en janvier.* (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes July 18.)

Things You Shouldn't Say Past Midnight—Peter Ackerman's screwball bedroom comedy consists mainly of a sublimely ridiculous conference call involving three pairs of lovers. The questions about sex and the proper balance between intellectual and physical attraction have no answers, but Ackerman has some interesting suggestions, and, to his credit, comedy outweighs the theorizing. John Rando, the director, has a good eye, and the show comes off beautifully. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

This Lime Tree Bower—A delightful tale (by Conor McPherson, who also wrote "The Weir") of three young Irishmen, each of whom goes off the rails in various ways but, with a little help from the other two, is able to put his life back together again. Neatly told as a series of overlapping monologues, the play is funny and sharply observed, and sweet without being sentimental. A perfect antithesis to this season's blockbusters. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

Thwak—Comic acrobatics (both physical and vocal) from the Australian performers David Collins and Shane Dundas, a.k.a. the Umbilical Brothers. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek—Two teens living in a country town during the Depression are at the center of this drama by Naomi Wallace. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475. Closes July 17.)

The Urn—A black comedy about complications wrought by a cryptic will, written by Peter Ackerman. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 581-4125. Closes July 24.)

The Weir—Conor McPherson's play takes place in the musty chill of a backwater Irish pub, where a handful of habitués chew the cud of their solitude, spinning ghostly yarns that fill the air with glimmers of fear and resignation. It has a bittersweet charm, but for all the well-crafted talk and the well-observed bonhomie, it is finally a shaggy-bog story. (4/12/99) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Wonderland—A comedy-drama by Julia Dahl, set in Sag Harbor, about a group of politically minded members of Generation X. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes July 25.)

You Are Now Entering Nellie Oleson—The ribald sketch comedy troupe known as the Nellie Olesons, in an evening of more than twenty new works. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOOTLOOSE:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . .

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE MYSTERY OF IRMA VEP:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. (Closes July 18.) . . . **OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Ibis, 327 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SIDE MAN:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE:** HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **WIT:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.

OUT OF TOWN

WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL—Main Stage: Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew," starring Bebe Neuwirth and Roger Rees, who also directs. Continues through July 18. . . . Nikos Stage: "The Glimmer Brothers," a new drama about the jazz world by Warren Leight ("Side Man"), starring Terry Beaver, Kim Raver, David Schwimmer, and John Spencer. July 14-25. (1000 Main St., Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3399.)

BAY STREET THEATRE—"The Factory Girls," Frank McGuinness's first play, in which a group of Donegal shirtmakers are faced with plant layoffs. July 14-Aug. 1. (Long Wharf, Main and Bay Sts., Sag Harbor, N.Y. 516-725-9500.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL—Opening the season with "Twelfth Night." (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575.)

DANCE

"KAYASSINE"—For its American début, the acrobatic coöperative Les Arts Sauts sets up an inflatable dome, spreads out some eight hundred recliner seats, and puts on an evening of aerial choreography directly over the heads of the audience. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. 875-5030. July 12, July 14-17, and July 20 at 7:15. . . . **NOTE:** There will be no late seatings. Through July 24.)

NEDERLANDS DANS THEATER—The forty-year-old company from Amsterdam brings two programs, "One of a Kind," a full-length ballet choreographed by artistic director Jirí Kylián, and an evening of repertory works by Kylián and Paul Lightfoot. (New York State Theatre. 875-5030. July 13-17 at 8 and July 18 at 3.)

PILOBOLUS—For its summer season, the Vermont sextet offers three programs, each with a première ("A Selection," about a troupe that misses a train out of Nazi Germany; "Uno, Dos, Tray," about a pair of soldiers and a waitress; or the solo "Femme Noire"), and an assortment of repertory works created over the past quarter-century. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 12-16 and July 19-20 at 8 and July 17 at 2 and 8. Through July 31.)

DANCES FOR WAVE HILL—The outdoor dance series presents three commissioned works: Rebecca Stenn and Trebien Pollard perform the duet "The Morning," to a composition for *shakuhachi*, a Japanese flute, played by James Schlefer; Dandelion Dance Theatre premières "2nd Class Sleeper, Seat 26"; and the choreographer Yasmeen Godder offers "Leaving Rooms," for three women. (249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. For information, call 718-549-3200. July 14 at 6:30 and July 18 at 5.)

ROSA MEI DANCE—The five-year-old company celebrates the milestone with a sort of All-American trilogy ("Red Rum," "White Noise," and "Blue Horses"). The martial-arts-inspired choreographer also offers "False Eyelashes," "Two Stellas," and "The Adventures of Stupid Girl." (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 924-0077. July 15-16 at 9 and July 17 at 8.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA—Flamenco dance presented in an intimate *tablao* setting by the nine-member company made up of three dancers (including the incomparable Soledad Barrio), two guitarists, a bass player, and three singers (including the wonderfully *sol y sombra* combination of singers Rafael Jimenez and Antonio Vizarraga). (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. July 14-16 and July 19-20 at 8 and July 17 at 7 and 10. Through July 31.)

OUT OF TOWN

FIRE ISLAND DANCE FESTIVAL—Richard Move, in the guise of Martha Graham at her most glamorous and imperious, hosts a slate of performers, including Cortez & Co., Momix, Mark Dendy Dance and Theatre, and Mark Morris Dance Group, in a benefit for Dancers Responding to AIDS. (The Pines, Fire Island. For more information, call 212-840-0770. July 17 at 5:30 and 7 and July 18 at 4.)

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL—July 14-15 at 8, July 16 at 8:30, July 17 at 2 and 8:30, and July 18 at 2: The Parsons Dance Company. . . . ¶ July 15-16 at 8:15 and July 17-18 at 5: Doug Varone and Dancers. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

'N SYNC—They may be the Backstreet Boys' archenemies, but America's second-favorite extra-sweet all-male quintet still makes the little girls scream (and their parents poor). With up-and-coming teenybopper Jordan Knight. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. July 13-16 at 7:30.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING—Dancing under the stars on the Lincoln Center plaza. July 14: From New Orleans, the blues pianist Henry Butler and the gospel-influenced vocalist Marva Wright. . . . ¶ July 15: Kristi Rose, the Sleepy LaBeef Band, and Ronnie Dawson lead a night of rockabilly swing. . . . ¶ July 16: Cuban *son* and *changui* with Henry Fiol and La Familia Valera Miranda. . . . ¶ July 17: Ken Peplowski and his All-Star Clarinets. . . . ¶ July 20: Joe Arroyo y La Verdad perform Colombian salsa. (Performances begin at 8:15, with dance lessons starting at 6:30. For more information, call 875-5766.)

WHITNEY HOUSTON—Despite the high-octane campaign that accompanied her ambitiously titled new CD, "My Love Is Your Love," Whitney seems to be suffering from the potentially incurable disease of diva inconsequentia. The album—by Houston standards—is just a minor, double-platinum success. But live, those gilded vocal cords take no prisoners. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 14-15 at 8.)

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN—Recent reports from towns as diverse as Atlantic City and Stockholm confirm that the Boss is back; perspiratory E-Street band sets (from "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" to "The Ghost of Tom Joad") linger long into the night. We also hear Springsteen's got less hair and a bit more girth—but don't we all? Even the fiercest Reaganites will take to his toned-down, acoustic version of "Born in the U.S.A." This is the start of a fifteen-night run. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. July 15, July 18, and July 20, all at 7:30.)

"THE VANS WARPED TOUR '99"—With Lollapalooza just a memory and Lilith Fair in disarray, this low-rent movable feast for skate punks and other potentates of the cargo-pants set has become a roaring success. This year's model features rapper Eminem, Green Day clones Blink 182, weed advocates Cypress Hill, and other assorted knuckleheads. (Downing Stadium, Randall's Island. 307-7171. July 16 at noon.)

IRON MAIDEN—The lumbering heavy-metal act. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. July 16-17 at 8.)

POP NOTES

LATIN MASS—In case you hadn't noticed, someone spilled salsa on the pop charts. Is this a genuine *español* invasion? Only if you can't tell the difference between a *taquería* and a Taco Bell. **ON THE 6** (Work), the début album by the bumptious actress Jennifer Lopez, isn't really Latin at all. There are two tracks in Spanish (one a duet with Marc Anthony, the real prize of this supposed invasion) and lots of maracas; the rest is diva fluff: saccharine ballads, lusty raveups, hip-hop production numbers. Lopez is a former dancer, and she has excellent timing; as a singer, though, she's a great actress. Anyway, it's a good title: "On the 6" refers to the train that used to whisk Lopez home to the Bronx.

RICKY MARTIN (Sony/C2), the English-language début by the Puerto Rican heart-throb, has now sold nearly five million copies in nine weeks (his previous four albums, all in Spanish, have cumulatively sold more than fifteen million). But, after the inescapable "Livin' la Vida Loca," is there life left on "Ricky Martin"? Once the singer unloads his next single, "She's All I Ever Had" (a chest-thumping ballad in the manner of Bryan Adams), and he moves another five million units, the question will be irrelevant. "Martin" is this year's perfect summer accessory: easy on the ears and light on the thinking. There's heavy cheese on every track—Martin pours on the schmaltz in Spanish, too—but the clever inclusion of a few of his older hits means it's not all filler.

Will **BAILAMOS** (Fonovisa) be the breakthrough record for Enrique Iglesias? Son of Julio Iglesias, the man who did for Latin music what Ricardo Montalban did for Corinthian leather, Enrique certainly has the pedigree. There are now two video versions of the snappy, flamenco-flavored "Bailamos" on MTV (one's from the soundtrack of "Wild Wild West"; Will Smith is a fan). But Iglesias lacks the charisma that transcends language; he's a gifted singer, but his Latin fire seems forced. We'll know more early next year, when he releases his first all-English effort. Meanwhile, "Bailamos" just missed hitting No. 1 on Billboard's Top Latin 50 chart. Iglesias lost out to another hot new Latin act—Santana.

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE—Free music in New York City's back yard. July 17 at 3: The sensuous voice and arresting presence of former Brand New Heavies singer **N'DEA DAVENPORT**. With the hip-hop duo Black Star. . . . ¶ July 18 at 3: The Chieftains founder **PADDY MOLONEY** recently started his own world-music label, Wicklow, and this show is a fine sampling of his remarkable good taste. On the bill are Värttinä, a quartet of harmonizing Finnish females, Laurel MacDonald, a Nova Scotian chanteuse (who will be assisted by New York bassist Bill Laswell), and Yat-Kha, an ensemble of Tuvan throat singers with a modern twist. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.)

"Irish Tenors"—Another child of Riverdance, this sad marketing effort brings John McDermott, Anthony Kearns, and Ronan Tynan to town with flutist James Galway and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 19 at 8.)

Buckwheat Zydeco—Stanley (Buckwheat) Dural, Jr., a leading ambassador of zydeco music, that gumbo of accordion-heavy grooves, is a true party professional. Vocal-cord trouble from decades of touring recently sidelined him, but the seasoned entertainer is back on his feet and ready to make even the most uptight New York crowd dance. Keep your eye on the washboard player. (NYC Blues Cruise, South Street Seaport, Pier 16. 630-8888. July 20 at 7 and 9:30.)

CLUBS

(Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton St., between Ludlow and Orchard Sts. (358-1633)—A narrow, dimly lit renovated bodega that's the ideal environment for three to five unknown bands a night struggling their way out of obscurity.

Bohemian Hall & Park, 29-19 Twenty-fourth Ave., Astoria (718-274-4925)—Up until the early twentieth century, beer gardens were a fixture of several neighborhoods in the city, central meeting places where immigrant families would gather to eat, drink, sing, and dance. Most of these outdoor enclaves have gone the way of the zeppelin, but at least one remains. In the Bohemian Hall's garden, beneath the leafy expanse of two dozen eighty-year-old elm trees, a sea of red picnic tables surrounds a small wooden stage. Pilsner, of course, is on tap, and an assortment of Czech beers and snacks (tripe with bread or salt sticks) is also available.

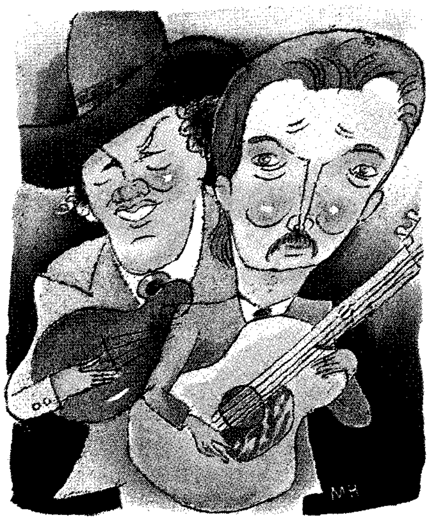
Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—July 17: While critics have been singing JOHN HIATT'S praise for decades, it's been mostly country artists who've turned his rootsy songs into hits. This show should be full of tunes that dissect modern life with the twin Hiatt trademarks—intelligence and wit. With AMY RIGBY, a former postmodern girl grouper (the Shams) and cowpunk (the East Village hillbilly band the Last Roundup) who's eking out a critically acclaimed but commercially ignored solo career.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—July 15: The OLD 97'S update country rock with punk economy. July 16: GREAT BIG SEA—four guys from Newfoundland and their mandolin, accordion, bass, and *bodhran* (a goatskin drum)—write and perform revved-up pop and chanteys. July 19: ATARI TEENAGE RIOT, the cartoonish German techno-industrial act.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Texas bluesman GUITAR SHORTY (July 14) cut his first singles in the late fifties, around the time that Otis Rush and Buddy Guy were making their débuts. But recordings have never fully captured the excitement of his live act.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—July 14-16: The fact that VIC CHESNUTT uses a wheelchair may have earned this unclassifiable singer-songwriter media attention, but his riveting music is what keeps his albums from gathering dust. His most recent disk, "The Salesman and Bernadette," includes haunting, heartfelt ballads that are his best work yet. July 19: Guitarist NED SUBLETTE, a West Texas native and New York transplant who visited Havana nine years ago and hasn't looked back. The label he founded, Qbadisk, helped set in motion the wave of Cuban music that has washed up on these shores this decade. "Cowboy Rhumba," his most recent album, is a bilingual excursion through the music of his birthplace and of his favorite Caribbean island.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—July 14: THE OLD 97'S (see the Bowery Ballroom). July 17: VIC CHESNUTT (see the Knitting Factory). July 20: MARY LOU LORD. Perhaps the world's most successful subway busker, this Boston singer, who specializes (like most buskers) in other people's material, earned her rebel stripes recording for the hip indie label Kill Rock Stars and has since moved on to the majors. With independent folkie DANIELLE HOWLE.



WILD RICE: *If bluegrass has a guitar god, it's forty-eight-year-old Tony Rice. His graceful playing has sent a generation of aspiring guitarists into conniptions trying to duplicate his clean, high-speed, otherworldly sound. The dapper Rice has introduced elements of jazz and blues to bluegrass, but he's never strayed from its roots; for some thirty years, one of his favorite guitars has been a 1935 D-28 herringbone Martin that belonged to his hero, the bluegrass innovator Clarence White. Rice's instrument, which sports a hole where the young White once shot it and which was once submerged underwater for three hours during a Florida hurricane, has turned out to be more durable than his own voice. Six years ago his warm baritone quit on him because of overuse; on his current tour (which comes to Tramps July 15), Rice leaves the singing to Peter Rowan, a master of high lonesome who came of age in Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and went on to record, with Jerry Garcia, Vassar Clements, and David Grisman, the legendary live bluegrass album "Old & In the Way."*

MARCELLUS HALL

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—July 15: A night of drum and bass with the THIEVERY CORPORATION. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—July 15: PETER ROWAN AND TONY RICE.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—July 19: Old-school headmasters COLD CRUSH BROTHERS celebrate twenty-three years of boasting and rapping, with BIZ MARKIE and other friends.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through July 18: The vocal harmony powerhouse TAKE 6. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through July 18: The CHARLES MC PHERSON quartet. Alto saxophonist McPherson has called the West Coast home for decades now, but he hasn't gone cool on us yet. With a steaming rhythm section behind him, he can still conjure up the intensity of his classic early-sixties albums for Prestige. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator LES PAUL.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—July 14-18: The BROTHER JACK MC DUFF quartet. McDuff came of age in an era when a jazz organist needed two things: a Hammond B3 and a hip moniker (cf. Big John Patton, Groove Holmes, and Baby Face Willette, for starters). His devotion to his instrument and the soulful bop that oozes from it make you glad he's around to take part in the current funky-organ revival. Dining.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—July 20: Keyboardist JOHN MEDESKI, of the neo-funketeer unit Medeski, Martin & Wood, mixes it up with the inventive drummer BOB MOSES, a familiar name to anyone steeped in jazz of the sixties and seventies.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. Stocked to the gills with exciting players, the JASON LINDNER BIG BAND holds court every Monday.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through July 16: The quartet of vibraphonist JOE LOCKE, pianist DAVID HAZELTINE, bassist RAY DRUMMOND, and drummer TONY REEDUS may share the same instrumentation as the Modern Jazz Quartet, just don't expect the same mood of refinement. Locke is a bruising player whose recent encounters with trumpeter Eddie Henderson showcased his dive-right-in proclivities; Hazeltine, no shrinking violet himself, makes a fine foil. Dining.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—July 16: The JOEY BARON group. Baron can remind you of another marvellous drummer, Billy Higgins—both are peerless rhythm men who play all night with ecstatic grins. Baron's musical approach to rhythm lends panache to any ensemble he assembles.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Jazz offspring are doing it for themselves, as proved by saxophonists Joshua Redman and Ravi Coltrane, and by pianist KENNY DREW, JR., who's here with his trio through July 18. With his florid dashes and prodigious technical displays, Drew doesn't much remind you of his father Kenny, the adroit, tasteful bebop pianist. Throwing both arms around a tune, the younger Drew reveals the gothic elements of the jazz repertoire. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—A young guitarist with flying fingers and a heart filled with bebop, RON AFFIF has a regular Monday gig (with his trio) at an intimate space that caters to guitar freaks—just right for a six-string whiz with almost too much to say. Saturdays and Sundays feature Brazilian jazz.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Gustave Moreau: Between Epic and Dream." Moreau (1826-98) is loosely confined within the context of symbolism, an aesthetic sensibility more than a movement, characterized as much by avant-gardism as by more traditional artistic impulses. Most of the paintings and drawings in this exhibition come from the Musée Gustave Moreau, in Paris, the artist's former residence; it remains the ideal environment in which to experience his sensorially rich, often weird and violent pictures. Nevertheless, this show offers ample opportunity to reconsider Moreau. Uninspired by the innovations of Courbet's realism and the succeeding generation of Impressionists, Moreau also disdained academic technique; instead, he forged a singular style, drawing inspiration from Italian Renaissance, medieval, Japanese, Mughal, and other sources. Curiously, Moreau's works—with their combination of drawing and painting, tenebrous chiaroscuro and jewellike color—look fresher now than many Impressionist canvases, which, through the sheer number of shows devoted to them, are beginning to seem like so much visual white noise. Through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ "Prayerbook for a Queen: The Hours of Jeanne D'Evreux," approximately three dozen illustrated pages by one of the masters of medieval illumination, Jean Pucelle (active 1320-34), are on view. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ In an adjacent gallery, a related show called "Devotions and Diversions" gathers some of the finest northern-European books from the dawn of printmaking. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Cézanne to van Gogh: The Collection of Dr. Gachet." More than fifty works (by Monet, Pissarro, Guillaumin, Sisley, Renoir, and, above all, Cézanne and van Gogh) owned by van Gogh's doctor have travelled across the Atlantic for the first time. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Collecting in Depth: Drawings by Grosz, Schwitters, Ernst, and Klee." In a nod to the barrage of drawing shows currently on view around Manhattan, MOMA's staff has put together an exhibition that casually proves who's top dog when it comes to twentieth-century works on paper. Each of the four artists represented gets a room to himself, and each room is crowded with delights and oddities. Schwitters, represented by almost forty works, including a handful of his finest abstract collages, steals the spotlight, but even Max Ernst, the Surrealist ideologue who should be the show's weak link, turns in a memorably lovely trifle, made from advertisements for panama hats. Through July 20. . . . ¶ "The Un-Private House" presents twenty-six houses (via designs, maquettes, digitally enhanced photographs, and interactive computer displays) that update the idea of the four (very un-) solid walls of home. Through Oct. 5. . . . ¶ "Fame After Photography." Through Oct. 5. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Surrealism: Two Private Eyes." A vast exhibition composed of work from the separate collections of publisher Daniel Filipacchi and the late Nesuhi Ertegun, who, as a partner with his brother Ahmet, owned Atlantic Records. The show is rich in terrific works, including such iconic Surrealist masterpieces as René Magritte's "The Rape" (1934), Salvador Dali's "The Phenomenon of Ecstasy" (1933), and Giorgio de Chirico's "The Disquieting Muses" (1925), and two astonishing rooms—one devoted to Cornell boxes, the other to Surrealist bookbinding. There is a lot of marvellous or, at the very least, curious work by lesser-known artists; on the other hand, there is a lot of dreck, both by unknown figures and by famous ones having a bad art day. Through Sept. 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The American Century: Art & Culture 1900-2000 (Part I: 1900-50)" is exactly what its unimaginative title implies—a grand, bland survey, full of familiar milestones but remarkably short on fresh connections or surprises. There's plenty to see, however: the six-hundred-odd works include architectural models, furniture, ceramics, magazine covers, and kitchen appliances, as well as canonical paintings and photographs. Ideally, the museum's educational mission should dovetail with its aesthetic one; here, the history lesson takes over, making for a dutiful, stolid, rainy-day resource. Through Aug. 22; Part II opens Sept. 26. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth is open, with rock formations, ice-core samples, earthquake and volcanic-events tickers, and other geologic displays. . . . ¶ "Epidemic! The World of Infectious Disease." Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition." Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Winslow Homer: Illustrating America" offers more than a hundred wood engravings, including many made when the artist was covering the Civil War. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ "Impressionists in Winter: Effets de Neige." Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ "Mariko Mori: Empty Dream" offers computer-generated photographs and installations by the Japanese artist. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays for the Impressionist show only, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Dahesh Museum, 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (759-0606)—"Revealing the Holy Land: The Photographic Exploration of Palestine." Almost immediately after the invention of photography, in 1839, early practitioners from Europe descended upon Jerusalem, in order to document the Biblical landscape. Twenty-five years later, in the eighteen-sixties, a British sergeant named James McDonald took the long-ignored survey photographs that form the core of this show. His beautifully composed views of Sinai, often centered on a single tree or central plain, make the Middle East look remarkably like O'Sullivan's or Watkins's boundless American West, and his city scenes and images of ruins present Jerusalem's monumentality with a classical grace. Through Aug. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"Shari Rothfarb: Water Rites," two short films and an installation on women and the mikvah bath, offers affecting pictures of the purifying ritual that helps define observant Jewish women's relationships to family, fertility, and sexuality. The title film is projected on a pool of still water, a sort of mini-mikvah. The other, "Ocean Avenue," Rothfarb's M.F.A. thesis, follows a woman in her fifties through her Brooklyn neighborhood as she searches for a daughter. The films take themselves a bit seriously, but the subject is a rich one, and well explored here. . . . ¶ Across the hall, Sophie Calle's "The Eruv of Jerusalem" looks at the way that public space is consecrated as private according to the rabbinic prohibition that forbids carrying objects outside the home during the Sabbath but that nevertheless provides for a symbolic extension of the home (a wire, say, strung around a neighborhood), which is called an eruv. Calle has created a conceptual version of such a space with photographs of fence posts around the gallery; a table in the center of the room is covered with photographs of and anonymous interviews about places in Jerusalem that people have adopted as part of their private world (one woman led Calle to the brick she was touching when her husband told her that he loved someone else). Both shows through Oct. 17. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. (873-3400)—"Dance for a City: Fifty Years of New York City Ballet" gathers costumes, design maquettes, film

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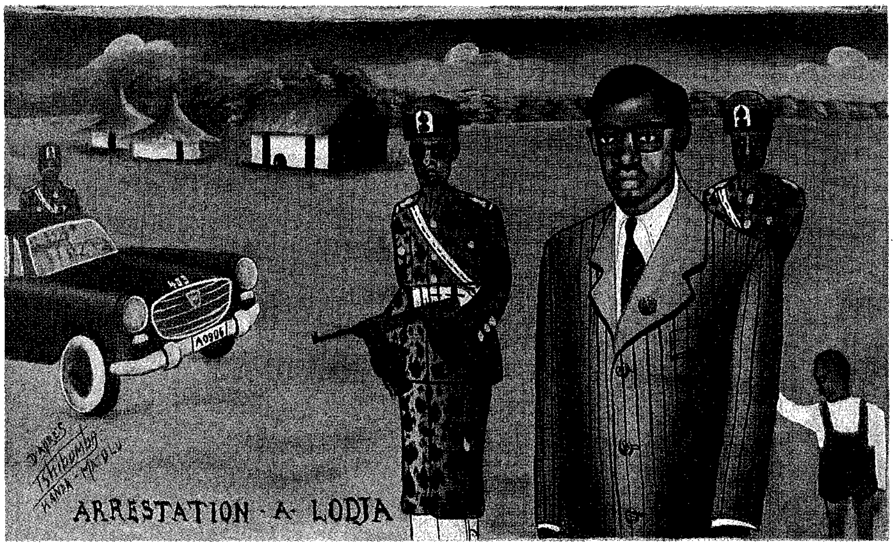


BEFORE MALCOLM: *Patrice Lumumba, the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the colony won independence from Belgium (in 1960), is the central, mythic figure in "A Congo Chronicle," at the Museum of African Art, through August 15. Most of the paintings (many signed "Tshibumba," a master who seems to have authorized his signature, à la School of Rubens, on the works of other café artists) depict the nationalist in heroic moments—giving his fiery independence speech, being arrested by Belgian forces or (above) by the deputies of the then Colonel Mobutu—but always, even in death, elegant, unflappable, bespectacled.*

clips, photographs, stage props, pointe shoes, ticket stubs, playbills, and other dance ephemera from the company's first half century. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway (966-1313)—"A Congo Chronicle: Patrice Lumumba in Urban Art," an exhibition of stylish and direct paintings by Zairean artists that present the onetime Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1960-61) as a somewhat bookish figure who nevertheless gained mythic stature in his country—as a martyr for independence and a prophet of liberation. Through Aug. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6.)

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—"David Reed Paintings: Motion Pictures," a survey of Reed's signature "brush mark" paintings from the seventies to the nineties. It also features the painter's recent video works, such as "Scottie's Bedroom" (1994) and "Judy's Bedroom" (1992). In these, Reed has altered segments from Hitchcock's "Vertigo," so that the artist's own paintings appear in the bedroom of the characters played by James Stewart and Kim Novak. Reed's actual paintings feel at once sensuous and cold: their thick strokes of strangely dematerialized paint evoke the romance of the painterly gesture, which is immediately chastened through exposure to the spaced-out luminescence of TV, video, and computer screens. Through Aug. 29. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer-hours warning: many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.)

José Bedia—Recent works on paper and canvas by this noted Cuban-born artist. In one of the most striking pieces, a wiry giant strides across a mountainous landscape, ignoring the small stylized heads that peek out from crags below. In another, an elongated woman reaches out to open a box, from which an undulating snake springs forward, as if to kiss her. The meaning of these mythological narratives isn't always clear, but they are drawn with delightful precision and economy. Through July 17. (Galeria Ramis Barquet, 41 E. 57th St. 644-9090.)

Adriane Herman—"À la Carte," an exhibition of humorous collages and objects by an artist who is a graduate of the Wilton Method Cake Decorating School (levels I and II). A portfolio called "Y2caKe" documents Herman's deployment of her skills behind the bakery counter of a grocery store in Kansas City, Missouri. (After a year, she was "ignominiously fired in the cat food aisle.") Also included is a "mobile art-vending unit" that displays chocolate bars wrapped in the artist's ink-jet prints. Though scattered and chaotic, Herman's work exudes an appetizing silliness. Through July 30. (Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. 861-7338.)

Stephan Cornelius Roberts—Gigantic female nudes, painted in a luminous yet plodding Photo-Realist style. Young, attractive, and approximately ten feet tall, Roberts's women stare out at the viewer with a cool poise that forbids titillation. The finest of them, seen in a full-length back view ("Painting of M. Again"), has a distinctive, exaggerated solidity. The others are so prim and bland that it's easy to imagine them as candidates for some sort of nudist political office. Through July 23. (Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-4997.)

"Another Country: The Constructed Landscape"—From the large, eye-popping "conglomerates" of Benjamin Edwards, which distill dozens of roadside gas stations or fast-food restaurants into single paintings, to the sly, small paintings of Merlin James (in an unmistakably drab English palette), this group show offers a variety of fresh takes on a normally staid genre. There are plenty of clouds and trees and flowers here, but even the most recognizable—Eva Lundsager's grand, liquefying skyscapes or Sharon Ellis's sleek and sinister flora—are full of singular charms. Through July 21. (Lawrence Rubin, Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 445-0444.)

"Snow Scenes"—This genteel complement to the Brooklyn Museum's "Impressionists in Winter" exhibit includes paintings by Monet, Seurat, Guillaumin, and Bonnard. The highlight, however, is a trio of sparkling paintings by Matisse's friend Albert Marquet. Two of these depict Alpine ski resorts, executed with a relaxed precision that is like the feeling of skiing itself. The third, "La Gare Montparnasse sous la Neige," depicts blanketed rail yards just at the moment when a black locomotive glides perfectly into place at the picture's center. Through July 30. (Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. 879-0500.)

"Spots"—A juried show of top "spot art," the insider term for magazine and newspaper illustrations, features as-is originals by established masters and new talent. Contributors include David Levine, Steve Brodner, Melinda Beck, R. O. Blechman, Al Hirschfeld, and Ben Katchor. Through July 31. (Society of Illustrators, 128 E. 63rd St. 838-2560.)

Short List—**Michael Brennan,** Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. 265-8876. Through July 31. . . . **Herbert Brown,** Gat, 1100 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. 327-0441. Through Sept. 30. . . . **Charles Henri Ford,** Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through July 16. . . . **Jasper Johns,** Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 489-3331. Through July 31. . . . **Liza Lou,** Vanderbilt Hall, Grand Central Terminal. Through July 26. . . . **Jan Matulka,** York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Through July 30. . . . **Odd Nerdrum,** Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through July 30. . . . **May Stevens,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669. Through Aug. 25.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

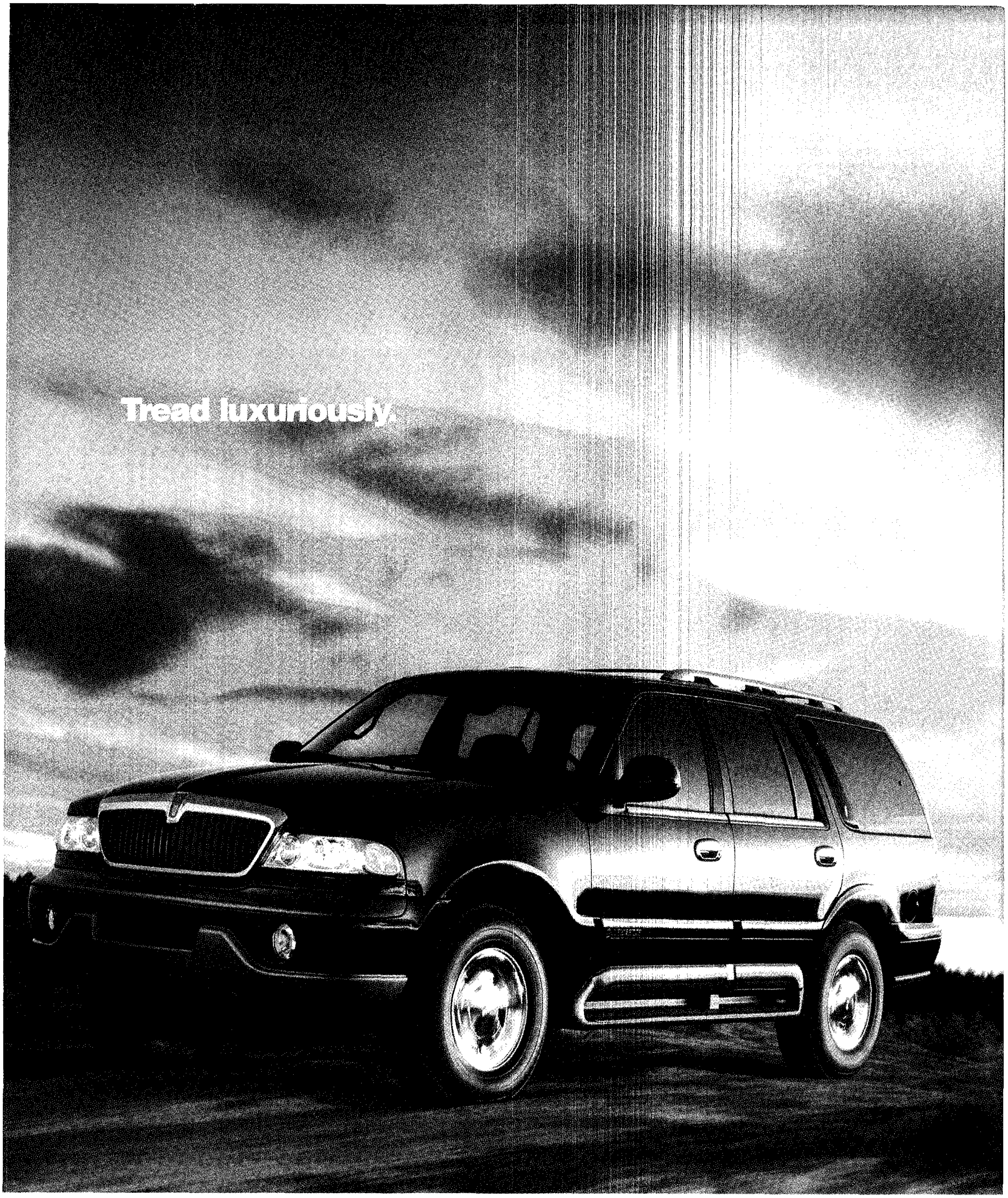
John Geary—"Hi," an exhibition of meticulously rendered charcoal drawings of simians and a video. There is something almost gross about the lushness of charcoal which works well with these slightly treacly but quite weird portraits of our evolutionary cousins. Just about every exhibition these days has to have a video element: in this one, the artist films reactions to his saying "hi" to people on Venice Beach. It provides just enough absurdism to complement the oddness of the highly detailed apes. Through Aug. 6. (Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555.)

Erik Hanson—Sculptures and works on paper. A former punk-rock d.j., Hanson makes simple drawings and sculptural "caves" that allude to his favorite David Bowie albums. Colored stalagmites and stalactites within represent the cuts on the record; for example, triangular teethlike formations in pretty shades of blue represent various songs from David's Ziggy Stardust phase. Through July 30. (Eller, 529 W. 20th St. 206-6411.)

Tatyana Murray—"Random Grace," the New York début of this young English sculptor, consists of slabs of light, plasterlike material, which bubble out into balloonlike shapes, as if someone had cast the walls of an apartment during a child's birthday party. Covered in red, blue, and black velvet, they're striking, but they don't quite get out of the Neat Effect category. Through July 17. (I-20, at 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100.)

"Caught"—Sculptures by Jason Meadows, Evan Holloway, and Samara Caughey; drawings of Nana Mouskouri by Shannon Oksanen; and a painting of a sci-fi moderne interior by Dexter Dalwood. Even Holloway's rough replica of a stealth bomber suggests a nostalgia for modernism's penchant for depicting the dark and mysterious. Best of all are Oksanen's drawings of the spectacled Greek pop chanteuse, which provide a whistle of irony. Through July 30. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

"Hang Time"—A summery group show, curated by Debra Singer and Lauren Ross, with works by nine artists (or art teams) devoted to leisure and sport: Pam Lins photographed Nerf footballs in midflight, Janet Cohen charted baseball pitch location, Cristian Alexa documented his protest against the



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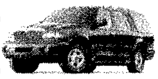
Lincoln Navigator. What a luxury [] should be.

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daily grind (he lay around in a hammock in a park near Wall Street). Through Aug. 1. (White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 924-4212.)

SHORT LIST—ANDREW CASTRUCCI, Generous Miracles, 529 W. 20th St. 352-2858. Through Sept. 30. . . . **SAINT CLAIR CEMIN**, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through July 30. . . . **LAURA EMRICK**, Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through July 30. . . . **RUDI MOLACEK**, Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494. Through July 30. . . . **MICHAEL PAHA**, Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Through July 30. . . . **RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA**, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Through Aug. 31. . . . **VANGELIS VLAHOS**, Kapernakas, 526 W. 26th St. 462-5150. Through July 17.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

PEDRO BARBEITO—Anyone who has ever pored dreamily over the illustrations to a *Scientific American* article will feel at home with these serene, unintelligible paintings. Barbeito starts by downloading images (black holes, molecules, meteorological charts) from the Internet; next he stretches and slices them with a 3-D computer program, then transfers them to canvas using a circular grid. The results—like large mysterious radar screens—have a seductive, high-tech glamour, if not much expressiveness. Through July 30. (Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831.)

BILL KOMOSKI—A suite of compelling abstract paintings that feature a repeated image such as a rippling bedsheet tacked down at four corners. The sheet shapes anchor the images, which otherwise billow up with twisting rivulets of pale primary colors. De Kooning's ribbony works from the eighties inevitably come to mind, but Komoski's images are less painterly and more calculated, with a distinctively disjointed, breezy energy. Through July 23. (Feature, 76 Greene St. 941-7077.)

MARTIN RAMIREZ (1885-1963)—Twelve previously unexhibited drawings by one of the greatest outsider artists of the century, a mute schizophrenic who lived the last thirty years of his life in a California mental hospital. Though Ramirez's fantastical landscapes usually include stylized cowboys, women, and deer, the finest are often the simplest, as in an image here of a narrow road, bordered by spiky pickets, that descends steeply from the mouth of a tunnel. Its precipitousness has a lovely, dream-like purity. As Le Douanier's "Sleeping Gypsy" conveys the terrors and promises of sleeping alone, this nearly abstract drawing distills an even more primal experience: going downhill. Through July 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200.)

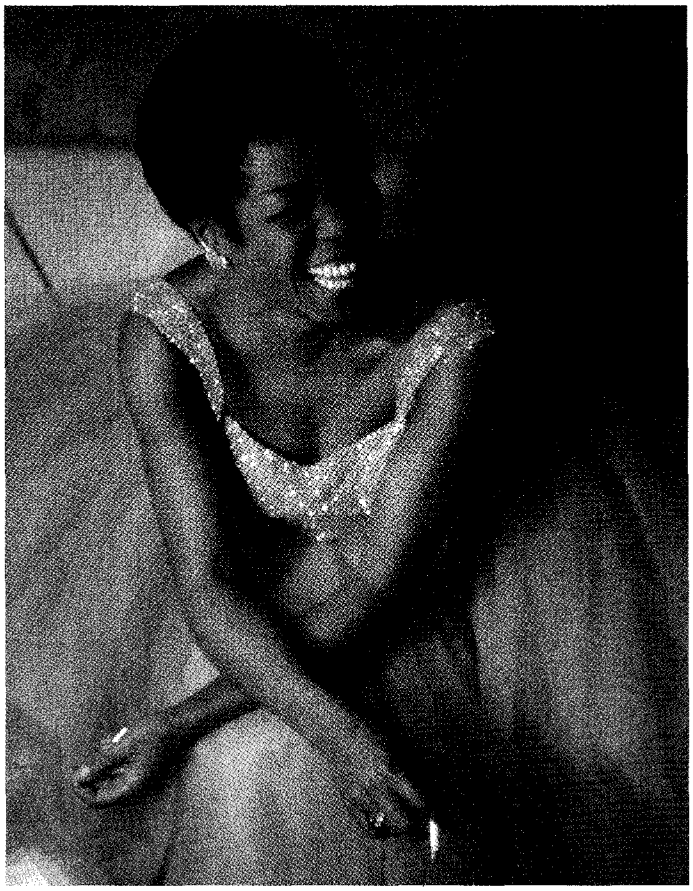
"MOZART ON TELEVISION"—A group show of new painting from Germany, with works by Monika Baer, Peter Klare, Dirk Skreber, and Daniel Richter, among others. Through Aug. 6. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

SHORT LIST—BARTON LIDICE BENEŠ, Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through July 30. . . . **BRIAN DELACEY**, Blue, 203 Lafayette St. 343-2446. Opens at noon Tuesdays through Sundays; through July 18. . . . **SYLVIE FLEURY** and **JOHN ARMLEDER**, Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Both shows through Aug. 30. . . . **AUSTIN THOMAS**, Sara Meltzer's On View, 588 Broadway. 343-8256. Through July 30. . . . **SUSAN WANKLYN**, Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 925-9424. Through Sept. 18.

PHOTOGRAPHY

WILLIAM CLAXTON—Evocative portraits of jazz musicians and film stars, from the early nineteen-fifties to the present, including images of Dinah Washington, Gerry Mulligan, Lauren Bacall, and Steve McQueen. Through July 16. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

JUDITH JOY ROSS / "BIG PICTURES, LITTLE PICTURES"—Made with an old-fashioned eight-by-ten-inch view camera, Ross's black-and-white portraits include a congressman looking ultra-stiff in a power suit and teenage twins who seem just as awkward in their tie-dyed T-shirts and eighties-style hairspray hair. Often simple in both subject and composition (a lot of head-on shots of children and parents who might be your neighbors), Ross's photography is inspired by the portraiture of August Sander and Diane Arbus, and she shares those artists' gifts for capturing flickers of the human spirit in ways that are at once disconcerting and quietly arresting. These are pictures that inform us about ourselves—about the discomfort of being singled out in a classroom, or the marvellous unselfconsciousness of being young and scrubby and eating a Pac-Man popsicle. / Juxtapositions of scale, as viewed in a presentation of works by Harry Callahan, Chuck Close, Robert Rauschenberg and Susan Weil, Christian Schad, Jan Henle, and Josef Sudek. Both shows through Aug. 27. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)



"Sarah Vaughan, Backstage of the Brooklyn Paramount Theater" (1960), by William Claxton, at Staley-Wise.

FRANCESCA WOODMAN (1958-81)—It seems appropriate that most of the images in this exhibit measure no more than four by five inches, considering that self-effacement was so much a part of Woodman's work. Although many of her photographs are self-portraits, she seemed to focus on her body only so that she could diminish it—by masking it in crumbling wallpaper or blurring it out of focus. Made mainly while Woodman was a student at the Rhode Island School of Design and during a year spent in Rome, most of the pictures evoke a disturbing sense of alienation which, when overdone, can start to feel contrived and art-schoolish. Sadly, this nascent stage of Woodman's development is all there is to go by; the artist took her own life when she was twenty-two. Through Aug. 31. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160.)

"ANIMALS ARE FUNNY PEOPLE"—Works by Garry Winogrand, Elliott Erwitt, William Wegman, and others. Through Sept. 18. (De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

"DOWN FROM UP"—Classic and contemporary images made from an elevated vantage point, by such artists as Alvin Langdon Coburn, Diane Cook, Mario Giacomelli, Emmet Gowin, Len Jenshel, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Through July 30. (Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211.)

"THE FULL MONTY"—Male nudes through the ages, by such photographers as Wilhelm von Gloeden, Man Ray, George Platt Lynes, Diane Arbus, and Peter Hujar. Through Aug. 13. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070.)

"PURE PRODUCTS OF AMERICA"—A three-artist show of black-and-white photographs of suburban life by Robert Adams, Bill Owens, and Henry Wessel. Through July 16. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

"RUSSIA IN TRANSITION: 1978-1998"—A compilation of pictures by both Russian and foreign photographers which range in subject from the overtly political to the subtly political to the apolitical. For the most part, in even the most ordinary scenes there is a reminder of the turmoil Russia has undergone throughout the latter part of this century—a picture by Vladimir Filonov shows a man shooting pool, oblivious to a deaccessioned portrait of Gorbachev propped up against a wall; in a work by Heidi Bradner, what at first glance appears to be a telescope in the hands of a young Chechen boy is actually a rocket launcher. Also on view in the front room are photographs by Yevgeny Khaldei, Russia's Robert Capa, who was ubiquitous in Vienna, Berlin, and Moscow during the Second World War. Through Aug. 7. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"STARS & STRIPES"—Images of Old Glory in photographs, folk art, and outsider art. Through Aug. 14. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

"SUMMER READING"—Photographs and photograms of books, including works by Andrew Bush, Tim Maul, Abelardo Morrell, Fawn Potash, Allison Rossiter, and Masao Yamamoto. Through Aug. 27. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

"SUMMER SALON VI"—An always breezy group show, this time featuring works by Peter Garfield, Orit Raff, and Leonard Nimoy. Through Aug. 20. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"THIN AIR"—Minimalist works by James Welling, Randy West, Bing Wright, and others. Through Aug. 20. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

"THIRTEEN"—Photographs by artists from the latest issue of *Blind Spot*, among them Graciela Iturbide, Barbara Ess, Vik Muniz, and Rosalind Solomon. Through Aug. 20. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600.)

"Tina Modotti and Edward Weston: Mexican Years"—Vintage prints made by the modernist pair during their years (1923-26) in Mexico, where Modotti matured from Weston's studio manager and pupil into his colleague. (Her status as muse remained unchanged.) In looking at some of the pictures, it can be difficult to distinguish whose is whose; both artists favored clean architectural lines and up-close naturalism. But while Modotti dared to flirt with propaganda, photographing a Cuban revolutionary's typewriter and campesinos reading the Communist newspaper *El Machete*, Weston was a devotee of studied form, whether that of his nude protégée, of diaphanous clouds, or of a maguey cactus. These visual differences foreshadowed ideological ones, which kept an increasingly activist Modotti in Mexico when Weston returned to California. But, before their split, both captured the raw elegance of Mexico and its people with a startling unaffectedness. Through July 17. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. 223-1059.)

Group Show—Works in which artifice is the subject, by Oliver Boberg, Thom Lussier, Michael O'Brien, John Schabel, and Bing Wright. Through July 30. (Dee, 118 Mercer St. 965-8884.)

International Center of Photography—"Sea Change: The Seascape in Contemporary Photography." Through Sept. 26.... ¶ "Myths, Dreams, and Realities in Contemporary Argentine Photography." Through Sept. 26. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Short List—**william gedney,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through July 31.... **james karales,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through July 31.... **michiko kon,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through Aug. 14.... **david la chapelle,** Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300. Through Sept. 15.... **skeet mc auley,** Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Through July 30.... **charles martin,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660. Through July 30.... **ray k. metzker,** Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Through Aug. 13.... **ezra stoller** and **henri cartier-bresson,** Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Through Aug. 13 and Aug. 31, respectively.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Dahesh Museum, and the Jewish Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

New York Grand Opera—The company's seven-year chronological survey of Verdi's operas—all twenty-eight of them—brimmed with rarities in its initial seasons. Now, in the project's penultimate year, the operas are all more or less standard, although even this week's offering, "Les Vêpres Siciliennes," veers toward the "less" side of that formula. In fact, this staging is thought to be the first New York performance of the work's original French version, which the Opéra de Paris introduced in 1855. Only later was the piece revised into "I Vespri Siciliani," the Italian version, which is nearly always heard in the work's relatively rare revivals. Vincent La Selva conducts a cast that includes soprano Michele Capalbo, tenor Edward Perretti, baritone Raemond Martin, and bass Valentin Peitchinoff. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 14 at 7. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 245-8837.)

"The Peony Pavilion"—The Lincoln Center Festival is presenting this twenty-hour Ming-dynasty Chinese opera in cycles of six three-and-a-quarter-hour episodes. (LaGuardia Concert Hall, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. July 16 at 4 and 8:30 and July 17-18 at 2 and 7. For information about tickets, call 875-5030.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—The orchestra, conducted by Kurt Masur, concludes its traversal of Beethoven's piano concertos, with Emanuel Ax as the soloist, at Avery Fisher Hall. July 14 at 8: The Concerto No. 4, as well as Reger's "Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Mozart." . . . ¶ July 15 at 8: The Concerto No. 5, plus the United States première of Dov Seltzer's oratorio "In Memory of Yitzhak" (composed in 1997, following the assassination, two years earlier, of Yitzhak Rabin). (875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

Rutgers Festival Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clarke conducts Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. July 15 at 1. No tickets necessary.)

Focus on Steve Reich—The Lincoln Center Festival trains its attention on the composer's music in various media. July 15: Reich's opera "The Cave," created in collaboration with video artist Beryl Korot, performed by the Steve Reich Ensemble.... ¶ July 17: "Drumming" (a classic work of minimalism, from 1971), "Triple Quartet" (featuring the Kronos String Quartet), and "Proverb" (with the Synergy vocal ensemble assisting).... ¶ July 20: "Tehillim" and "The Desert Music," with David Robertson conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Synergy, and the Steve Reich Ensemble. (Alice Tully Hall. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets and about related events, call 875-5030.)

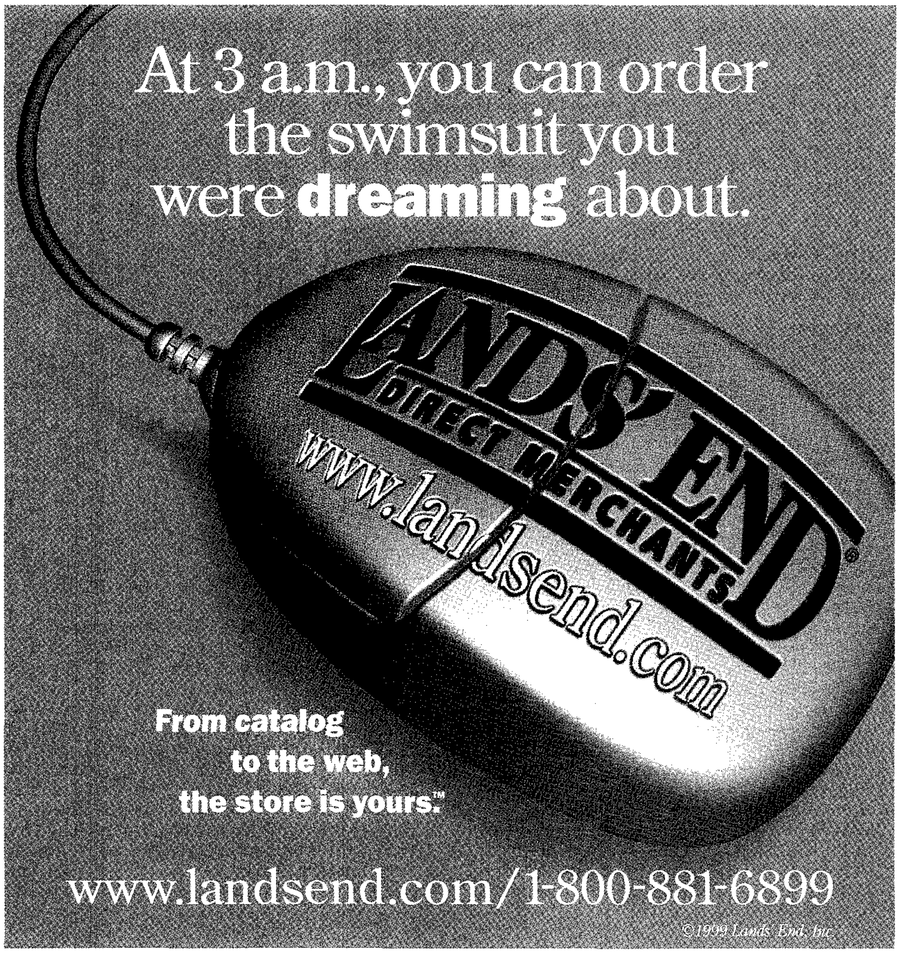
New Amsterdam Symphony—Thomas Daniel Carling leads symphonies by Dittersdorf and Michael Haydn, Haydn's D-Major Keyboard Concerto (with pianist Scott Dunn), and Boccherini's "La Musica Notturna delle Strade di Madrid." (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. July 20 at 7. Tickets at the door.)

RECITALS

"Music in the Garden"—The outdoor series continues, with piano trios by Beethoven, Brahms, and Fauré played by violinist Jorge Avila, cellist Allen Alexander, and pianist Steve Heuter. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. July 14 at 7:15. Admission by contribution.)

Mannes International Keyboard Institute—This gathering of pianists includes three recitals this week. July 14: Lambis Vassiliadis, who directs the Synchrono Conservatory in Thessaloniki, performs variations by Haydn (in F Minor), Brahms (on a theme by Paganini), and Rachmaninoff (on a theme by Chopin).... ¶ July 16 at 8: Bach's "Goldberg" Variations, presented in a lecture-performance by Michael Oelbaum.... ¶ July 17: The St. Petersburg String Quartet plays quartets by Prokofiev (his Second) and Tchaikovsky (his First), and pianist Jerome Rose joins them for Schumann's Piano Quintet.... ¶ July 18: Anthony Molinaro, winner of the 1997 Naumberg International Piano Competition, performs several of his own works, in addition to Prokofiev's Sonata No. 7. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Evenings at 8. Tickets at the door.)

"The American Century"—A series of hour-long recitals, connected with the Whitney Museum of American Art's exhibition about art and culture in twentieth-century America, continues, as soprano Margery Cohen, baritone Joseph Neal, and pianist Woody Regan offer songs by eleven composers, including Copland, Gershwin, and Bernstein. (Madison Ave. at 75th St. July 15 at 6:30. No tickets required beyond admission to the exhibition; for more information, call 877-944-8639.)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Bargemusic—July 15 at 7:30 and July 18 at 2: Violinist Mark Peskanov, cellist Eugene Osadchy, and pianist Ruth Laredo perform piano trios by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 502) and Mendelssohn (in C Minor); soprano DeBorge Pinnington joins the string players for "Circle II," which she and Mr. Peskanov composed. . . . ¶ July 16 at 7:30: Mr. Peskanov is featured in Bach's A-Minor Violin Concerto and Schubert's A-Major Rondo (D. 438), and is joined by Ms. Laredo and other colleagues for Chausson's Concerto for Violin, Piano, and String Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

Absolute Ensemble—Kristjan Järvi conducts the group in Charles Coleman's "Absolution," Bach's E-Major Violin Concerto and Ilan Rechtman's "Variations on 'Dark Eyes'" (both featuring Lara St. John), and John Adams's "Scratchband" and Chamber Symphony. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. July 16 at 8.)

Summergarden—Vocal music comes to the fore in the Museum of Modern Art's summer series of twentieth-century music, which focusses this year on compositions by women. In this recital, soprano Hila Plitman and pianist Joel Sachs (the series's organizer) offer works by Tania León, Sofia Gubaidulina, Calliope Tsoupaki, Younghi Pagh-Paan, Joan La Barbara, and Libby Larsen (her "Sonnets from the Portuguese"). (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 16-17 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

"Sundays on the Island"—Presenting Beethoven's Septet (Op. 20). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. July 18 at noon.)

Jon Gillock—This American organist moved to Paris in 1977, to study with the distinguished organist and composer Olivier Messiaen, whose (then) complete organ works he had already performed in New York. He continues to reside in France, and serves as a leading champion of his late teacher's organ works both there and abroad. With this performance of the "Livre du Saint Sacrement," he concludes a four-concert cycle of Messiaen's compositions for organ, a contribution to the city's musical life that the New York Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will acknowledge in the course of the evening by naming Mr. Gillock its Performer of the Year. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. July 20 at 7. Tickets at the door.)

OUT OF TOWN

(A selective listing of festival events within a reasonable drive from New York City. Call the presenters for complete schedules.)

Caramoor—July 15 at 4:30: Pianist Jonathan Biss performs works by Mozart, Brahms (his "Handel Variations"), Janáček, and Chopin. . . . ¶ July 16 at 8: Pianist Hélène Grimaud performs Bach's "Italian" Concerto, in addition to sonatas by Beethoven (in A-Flat Major, Op. 110) and Brahms (his Third). . . . ¶ July 17 at 8: Rossini's opera "La Gazza Ladra," in a semi-staged performance by soprano Marguerite Krull, mezzo-soprano Vivica Genaux, tenor Glenn Siebert, baritone Jonathan Hays, bass David Shapero, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Will Crutchfield conducting. . . . ¶ July 18 at 4:30: Peter Oundjian leads members of the Orchestra of St. Luke's in wind serenades by Dvořák and Mozart (the "Gran Partita"). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

Opera Festival of New Jersey—Final performances of the season. July 15 and July 17 at 8: "Madama Butterfly." . . . ¶ July 16 at 8 and July 18 at 2: Dominick Argento's "Postcard from Morocco." (McCarter Theatre, 91 University Pl., Princeton, N.J. 609-683-9100.)

Tanglewood—July 16 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa leads the Boston Symphony in Stravinsky's "Chorale Variations on 'Vom Himmel Hoch'" and "Pulcinella" Suite, in addition to Mozart's C-Minor Mass (with soprano Hei-Kyung Hong, mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, tenor Richard Clement, bass-baritone John Relyea, and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus). . . . ¶ July 17 at 8:30: James Conlon conducts the Boston Symphony in Martinů's "Memorial to Lidice" (written in 1943 to commemorate the Nazis' decimation of a Czech village), Karl Goldmark's Violin Concerto (with Sarah Chang), and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. . . . ¶ July 18 at 2:30: Mr. Ozawa and the Boston Symphony perform an all-Brahms program comprising the "Variations on a Theme by Haydn," the "Alto Rhapsody" (featuring Monica Groop and the gentlemen of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus), and the Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Peter Serkin). . . . ¶ July 20 at 8:30: Keith Lockhart leads the Boston Pops Orchestra in a Broadway program, with soprano Audra McDonald. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

Newport Music Festival—This festival, which takes place in various Newport mansions, offers as many as five concerts a day; this year, many performances feature music by Rachmaninoff. Here are some of this week's highlights. July 16 at 9: The pianist-comedian Victor Borge. (The Breakers.) . . . ¶ July 17 at 7: Schubert's "Die Schöne Müllerin," performed by baritone Christòpheren Nomura and pianist Kayo Iwama. (Marble House.) . . . ¶ July 17-18 at 11:45 P.M.: Late-night Liszt with pianists Vladimir Ovchinnikov and Nelson Goerner. (Marble House.) . . . ¶ July 18 at 9: British duo-pianists Piers Lane and Hamish Milne. (The Breakers.) (Newport, R.I. 401-849-0700. The festival continues through July 25.)

Glimmerglass Opera—July 17 at 8 and July 19 at 2: Monteverdi's "Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria," with a cast that includes mezzo-sopranos Phyllis Pancella and Christine Abraham, countertenor David Walker, tenor George Shirley, baritone James Maddalena, and bass-baritone Mark McCrory; conducted by Jane Glover. . . . ¶ July 18 at 2: "Rigoletto." (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

Maverick Concerts—July 17 at 8: Steven Lubin performs piano sonatas by Beethoven (in F Major, Op. 54), Chopin (his Third), and Schubert (in B-Flat Major, D. 960). . . . ¶ July 18 at 3: The American String Quartet plays quartets by Dvořák (the "American"), Haydn (in F Major, Op. 77, No. 2), and Berg. (Woodstock, N.Y. 914-679-8217.)

Music Mountain—The Leontovich String Quartet plays Brahms's C-Minor Quartet (Op. 51, No. 1); pianist Volodymyr Vynnytsky assists the group in Weber's Piano Quartet in B-Flat Major (Op. 28, a great rarity from a composer little associated with chamber music) and Franck's Piano Quintet. (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. July 18 at 3.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Readings—July 14 at 7: By Niall Williams, from his novel "As It Is in Heaven." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 14 at 7:30: By Frederick Busch, from his novel "The Night Inspector." (Community Bookstore, 143 Seventh Ave., at Garfield Pl., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 15 at 7: By Lawrence D. Mass, Maxine Wolfe, Rodger McFarlane, and David Willinger, from their contributions to "We Must Love One Another or Die: The Life and Legacies of Larry Kramer." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—July 15 at 6: Gail Cunard, director of the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, talks about the history of the sport. (Fraunces Tavern Museum, 54 Pearl St. 425-1778.) . . . ¶ July 18 at 1: Artist Patricia Cronin discusses and demonstrates painting techniques used by the Impressionists. (Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway. No tickets beyond museum admission.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Maiden Voyages

JUST as Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did but backward and in high heels, many adventurous women scaled mountains and crossed deserts in long skirts and high-buttoned shoes, without getting the attention that male explorers did. **The Virago Book of Women Travellers**, a collection of letters, essays, and journal entries, records three centuries of the derring-do of more than fifty women.

In **Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Comet of the Enlightenment** (Oxford), Isobel Grundy chronicles the intrigues of England's most swashbuckling lady of letters, who travelled to Turkey in 1716 and scandalized London by donning men's bloomers and a caftan. Lady Mary believed that Muslim women's body-covering dress gave them greater freedom than English women enjoyed. "'Tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street," she wrote. "This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery."

A century later, Frances Trollope, mother of Anthony and possessor of what an admiring swain once called "the neatest foot and ankle I ever saw," headed for the New World. Pamela Neville-Sington provides a delightful biography in **Fanny Trollope: The Life and Adventures of a Clever Woman** (Viking). Mrs. Trollope's humorous but critical depiction of colonial society, entitled "The Domestic Manners of the Americans," was a best-seller, but it got her ostracized from the tea-party circuit. The freedom enjoyed in America, she wrote, "is enjoyed solely by the disorderly at the expense of the orderly."

Another Englishwoman, Isabella Lucy Bird, seems to have enjoyed her American travels unreservedly. In **A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains**, republished by the University of Oklahoma Press, she recounts a sunset in the Sierras: "A carnival of color began which I can only describe as delirious, intoxicating, a hardly bearable joy, a tender anguish, an indescribable yearning, an unearthly music, rich in love and worship. It lasted considerably more than an hour."

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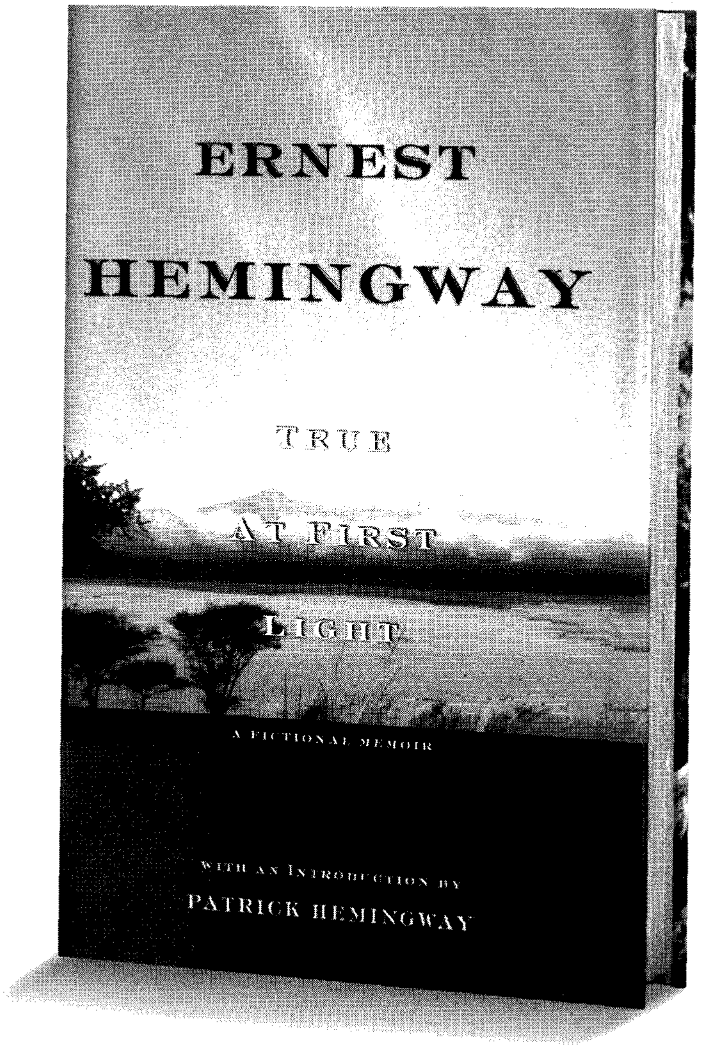
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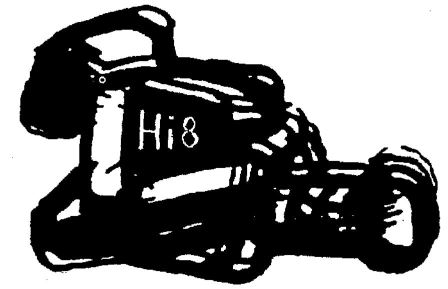


THE MOVIES

OPENING

The Blair Witch Project—A sci-fi thriller, directed by Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez. Opening July 14. (Angelika Film Center.)

Eyes Wide Shut—Stanley Kubrick's last film, starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Opening July 16. (Coronet Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

I'm Losing You—The personal journeys of the members of a wealthy Los Angeles family, based on Bruce Wagner's novel of the same name. Directed by Wagner, with Frank Langella, Andrew McCarthy, and Rosanna Arquette. Opening July 16. (Quad Cinema.)

Lake Placid—A thirty-foot killer crocodile shows up in a Maine lake. With Bill Pullman, Bridget Fonda, Oliver Platt, and Brendan Gleeson; directed by Steve Miner. Opening July 16. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Muppets from Space—Gonzo searches the heavens for clues to his past. Directed by Tim Hill. Opening July 14.

The Velocity of Gary (Not His Real Name)**—Three friends and romantic rivals become a sort of family when one of them is taken ill. With Vincent D'Onofrio, Salma Hayek, and Thomas Jane; directed by Dan Ireland. Opening July 16. (Art Greenwich Twin.)

The Wood—A comedy about three friends (Omar Epps, Taye Diggs, and Richard T. Jones) who reminisce about growing up in Inglewood, California. Directed by Rick Famuyiwa. Opening July 16.

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

American Pie—Four senior boys at a Michigan high school decide to end their status as virgins and undergo various erotic adventures—some ridiculous or humiliating, some gratifying—which they then relate to one another. The writer, Adam Herz, and the team of Paul and Chris Weitz (the first directs, the second produces) aim low and score. "American Pie" is often funny (one sequence involving a beautiful foreign-exchange student, a horny boy, and broadcasting over the Internet is classic), but you may come out depressed by it. The coarseness in itself is not offensive, but the notion that privacy couldn't possibly be a value that matters to anyone is. With a bevy of young actors, of whom Chris Klein, as a soft-voiced lacrosse player, is by far the most charming.—*David Denby* (7/12/99) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Union Square, and Waverly.)

Arlington Road—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me—A crud classic, featuring the return of Mike Myers as the grinningly fatuous Brit-twit spy who is so available for sex that he marches naked down the steps of a posh hotel, rolling his shoulders and smirking at every woman who passes by. Ostensibly a parody of the Bond movies, the Austin Powers comedies are closer to a celebration of the redeeming power of shamelessness. But while acknowledging what Myers has added to the world in the way of good cheer, let us also note that this is a movie in which a dwarf bites the star in the crotch and then gets swung around and bashed into a pole. There are depressing scatological jokes, candy-colored mod sets, goony mock-sci-fi scenes, and too many exuberantly bad ideas that wear down fast. With Robert Wagner, Rob Lowe, and Heather Graham. Directed by Jay Roach.—*D.D.* (7/5/99) (Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Criterion Center, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Big Daddy—Anyone looking to solve the mystery of Adam Sandler's mass appeal is not going to do it here. In his latest film, Sandler adopts a little boy to get his girlfriend back, and, of course, each teaches the other lessons about love and responsibility. The tepid movie is supposed to up the ante for Sandler much as "Liar, Liar" did for Jim Carrey (it elevated him from gross-out gag king to warm comic actor). But Sandler lacks any kind of discernible comic energy; he's just meandering around the film waiting for something to happen, and almost nothing funny does.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, Waverly, and Union Square.)

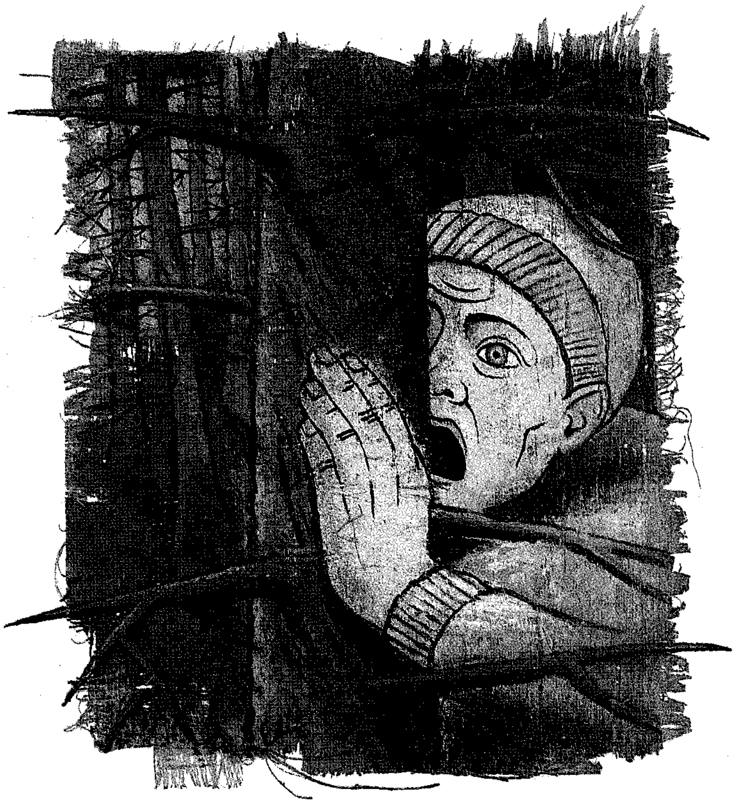
Buena Vista Social Club—In 1996, the blues guitarist Ry Cooder gathered together some wonderful Cuban musicians in their seventies and eighties for a successful recording project. Two years later, Cooder went back to Cuba, this time accompanied by cameras and the German director Wim Wenders, seeking out the men and women of Cuban music on the streets and in the old dance halls of Havana. The musicians still look great, play beautifully, and exude a stirring seriousness and dignity; the movie comes closer to pure happiness than anything else in the theatres at the moment.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Dinner Game—Francis Veber's movie sounds disappointingly courteous; the original French title, "Le Dîner de Cons," is much ruder and certainly closer to the misanthropic spirit of this farce. The premise is as entertaining as you could hope for: every Wednesday a bunch of smart young Parisians hold a dinner, to which each of them must invite a complete idiot. This often entails spending large portions of the week hunting down someone of sufficient inanity; admirers of Flaubert's "Bouvard and Pécuchet" will be thrilled to learn that the encyclopedic French desire to collect fine examples of human folly is alive and well. In this case, Pierre (Thierry Lhermitte) is delighted with his latest catch—Pignon (Jacques Villeret), a spherical buffoon whose principal talent is for making models out of matchsticks. Needless to say, Pierre's plan stumbles when Pignon offers to help him sort out his life. No one could claim that the film is a distinguished contribution to cinema, but it would be churlish to resist its geniality and speed. Based on Veber's own play, and it shows. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (Paris.)

Dog Day Afternoon (1975)—One of the best "New York" movies ever made. Sidney Lumet directed this fictional re-creation of an unusual bank robbery on a ninety-seven-degree day in August, 1972, working from Frank R. Pierson's very fine script. Sonny (Al Pacino), who is trapped in the middle of robbing a bank, with a crowd gathering in the street outside, is a married working-class man; he got into this robbery mess by trying to raise money for his lover Leon (Chris Sarandon) to have a sex-change operation. The most touching element in the film is Sonny's inability to handle all the responsibilities he has assumed. Though he is half-crazed by his situation, he is trying to do the right thing by everybody—his wife and children, the suicidal Leon, the hostages in the bank. The contrast between the small, frightened nutty robbers inside the bank and the huge apparatus of police, F.B.I., and news media outside adds to the lunacy.—*Pauline Kael* (A Different Light Bookstore; July 18.)

Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! (1965)—A highlight of what Russ Meyer called his "drive-in period," this rabid Z movie opens with an "Outer Limits"-style warning about a new breed of killer females, then revels in their mayhem. The antiheroines are bosomy go-go dancers and sports-car freaks, led by Tura Satana, a greedy man-hater with a mean karate chop.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; July 19.)

An Ideal Husband—A little more than a hundred years since its première, Oscar Wilde's languorous play has been newly adapted for the screen, with a few superfluous nudges to re-



Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez's "The Blair Witch Project."

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

mind us that we are once again facing a fin de siècle. The plot pits dastardly blackmail against upright honor, and one is scandalized, as ever, to find that honor wins the fight. (Wilde as moralizer, rather than amused moralist, is never a pretty sight.) The radiant Mrs. Cheveley (Julianne Moore) turns up in London and unearths a spot of compromising dirt from the past of Sir Robert Chiltern (Jeremy Northam), a tediously unsullied politician. He has a perfect wife (Cate Blanchett), an irritating sister (Minnie Driver), and a friend called Lord Goring (Rupert Everett), who shines like a naughty deed in a good world. So automatic is one's sympathy for Goring, and for Everett's low-toned, cunning performance, that the rest of the story, and most of the cast, feels thin and strained by comparison. The director, Oliver Parker, tries to correct the imbalance by pushing Wilde's comedy of manners toward farce; this results in a grossly cheerful finale that bears all the grace of an amateur dramatics night.—*A.L.* (7/5/99) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Square.)

Late August, Early September—The director of "Irma Vep," Olivier Assayas, returns with a simple but powerful tale about a group of Parisians and their intense relationships. The young actors—François Cluzet (as a dying writer), Mathieu Amalric (his best friend), and Jeanne Balibar, Virginie Ledoyen, and Mia Hansen-Løve (their various girlfriends)—turn in realistic and varied performances that make the film a convincing, if familiar, story of love and loss. The movie is episodic (it's told in six parts), but instead of lurching from one point to the next Assayas's relaxed camera style gives the viewer the feeling of eavesdropping, and the transitions are effortless. In French.—*B.D.* (Film Forum.)

The Lovers on the Bridge—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Film Forum.)

A Man Escaped (1956)—In this country, escape is a theme for action movies, but the French director Robert Bresson is famous for his uncompromising methods, and, having been a prisoner of the Nazis himself, he is not disposed to treat his material—André Devigny's account of his escape from the Montluc fortress prison—lightly. Bresson's hero's ascetic, single-minded dedication to escape is almost mystic, and the fortress constitutes a world as impersonal and as isolated as Kafka's. The movie was shot at Montluc with fanatic authenticity; François Leterrier, a Sorbonne philosophy student, is the lead. In French.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; July 20.)

My Darling Clementine (1946)—John Ford's version of the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral is unhurried yet thrilling: it seems to be moving to the rhythm of Henry Fonda's tense, elegant stride. Fonda, wearing a little mustache, plays the fabled lawman Wyatt Earp, and it's a beautiful, delicately shaded performance. Young Mr. Earp is a true hero, a man of almost unfathomable courage and integrity, but Fonda makes us believe him: he gives the character a luminous simplicity. The movie is largely atmospheric and anecdotal—a patient buildup to the big shootout. There's a long, daringly slow sequence, set on a bright Sunday morning in Tombstone, which ends with a town dance: it's one of the most brilliant scenes of Ford's career. This is a Westerner's Western—laconic and large-spirited.—*Terrence Rafferty* (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 18.)

My Son the Fanatic—The great Indian actor Om Puri, who has a face like a serried mountain range, gives a memorable performance as Parvez, a quiet Pakistani taxi-driver living in a dreary northern-England industrial town. For years, the assimilated Parvez has worked to provide for his family, only to have his son suddenly reject Western values and then compound the insult by inviting a group of hungry fundamentalist hangers-on into the house. The writer, Hanif Kureishi, and the director, Udayan Prasad, work the culture clash for comedy and for anguish, too—Parvez, waking up emotionally, falls in love with one of the prostitutes (Rachel Griffiths) he's been driving around, and the fundamentalists, including Parvez's son, go berserk. With Stellan Skarsgård as a brutal German businessman.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

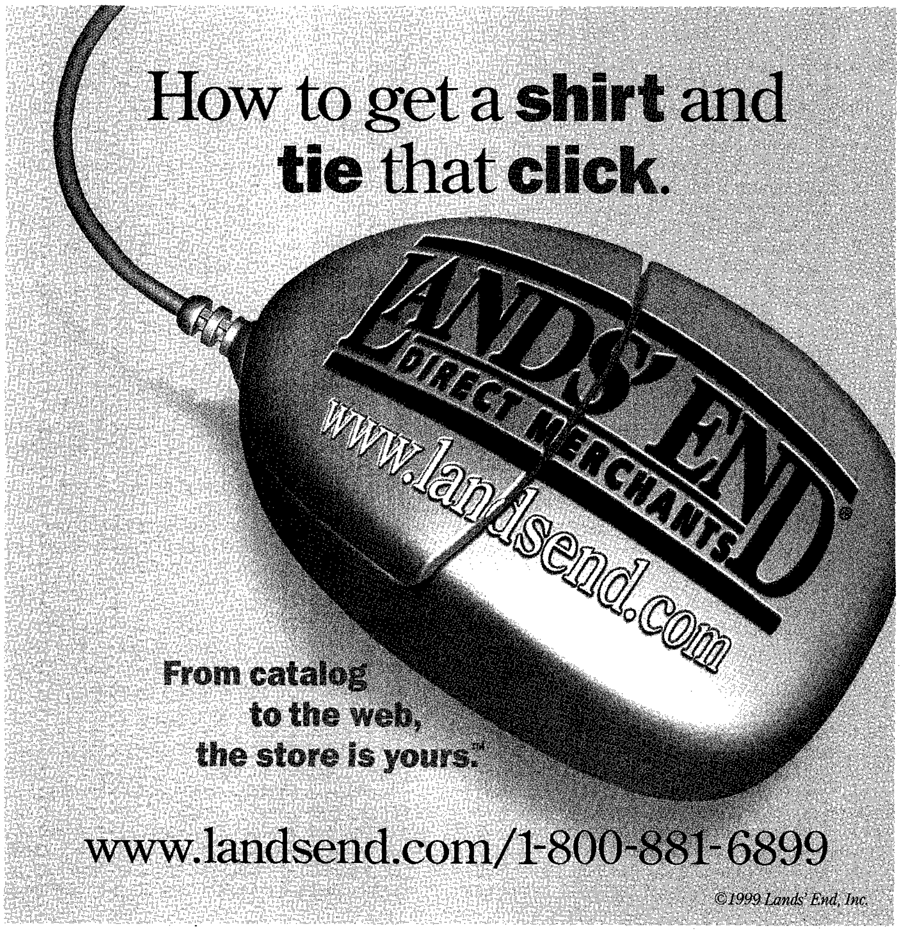
Notting Hill—The first outing for screenwriter Richard Curtis and leading man Hugh Grant since their collaboration on "Four Weddings and a Funeral." The new movie is less inclined to tomfoolery; the gags are quieter and more sparsely planted. Grant plays a London bookseller named William Thacker; Julia Roberts plays Anna Scott, a movie star who wanders into his store. The two of them fall in love, then out of love, and so on; you feel lulled rather than excited by the sway of the plot, and Curtis's essentially benign attitude—most of the characters are charming but screwy, and they get along just fine—seems to tame the director, Roger Michell.—*A.L.* (6/7/99) (Art Greenwich Twin, Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

The Red Violin—Joshua Bell's impassioned violin soars above a dark matting of strings in John Corigliano's soundtrack score—the most valuable element to emerge from this grandiose French-Canadian project, an omnibus film that chronicles the life of a great violin made in Cremona in the late seventeenth century. Unfortunately, the director-screenwriter team, François Girard and Don McKellar, don't seem to have worked out a coherent idea of what the violin means to each of its owners.—*D.D.* (6/14/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, and Union Square.)

Regret to Inform—Barbara Sonnenborn's personal, haunting documentary concerning her journey to Vietnam on the twentieth anniversary of her husband's death is a deeply affecting look at the widows that the war left behind on both sides. Sonnenborn intercuts her frank interviews with horrific war footage and her own husband's voice (he sent her a tape that she received only after his death). Beautifully photographed, with an elegiac Vietnamese soundtrack, at times the film approaches a poetry that few documentaries of this kind have managed to achieve.—*B.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin.)

South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut—Trey Parker and Matt Stone's television-cartoon phenomenon about four potty-mouthed boys and the cold mountain town they live in gets a big, splashy, singing-and-dancing, R-rated feature-film début—and it's pretty damn fat-ass funny. Parker and Stone's animation style—brightly colored cutouts on minimally painted backgrounds—owes a whole lot to Colorforms, and its very cheesiness is endearing. The movie, basically a rant against the motion-picture rating system, features more foul language than "Fritz the Cat," and the exploits of Stan, Kyle, Kenny, and Cartman—who are trying to save South Park from a conflicted Devil (his boyfriend, Saddam Hussein, doesn't appreciate him)—are really just an excuse for some wonderful musical numbers that parody both Disney and Broadway. (The film opens just like "Oklahoma!" and has a show-stopping number sung by the Devil called "Up There" that kicks "The Hunchback of Notre Dame"'s butt.)—*B.D.* (East 85th Street, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace—It has been more than twenty years since George Lucas directed a movie. Amid the fuss that has attended his return to the fray,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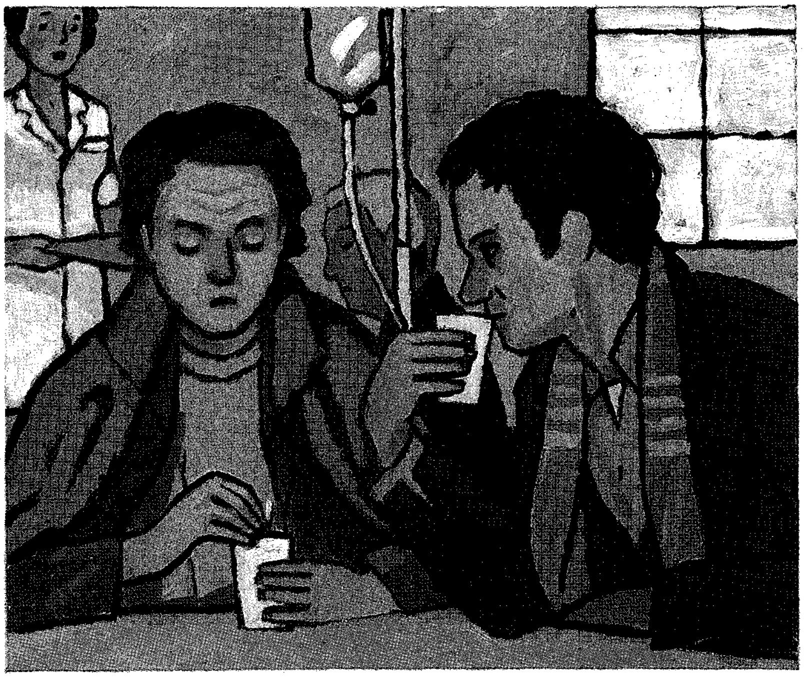
no one seems to have wondered whether he was up to the task. With this film, Lucas demonstrates two facts: one, that he has kept abreast of the recent leaps in special effects, and two, that he hasn't a clue what to do with all the nondigital figures, otherwise known as "people." Three fine actors were lured into this farrago: Ewan McGregor plays the young Obi-Wan Kenobi, Liam Neeson is his Jedi mentor, Natalie Portman plays a teen-age queen, and all of them look as if they were recently abused by robots.—*A.L.* (5/24/99) (East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)



François Cluzet and Mathieu Amalric in "Late August, Early September."

JEAN-CLAUDE GOTTING

Summer of Sam—In the sweltering New York summer of 1977, David Berkowitz, the psychotic killer known as Son of Sam, terrorizes the city while, in the Bronx, young Italian-Americans seek pleasure in sex and disco. Spike Lee, working from a screenplay originated by the actor-writers Michael Imperioli and Victor Colicchio, suggests that we are all David Berkowitz—the madness is everywhere. The Italian-Americans, for instance, are killing one another out of fear, ignorance, and intolerance. Slamming different kinds of experience together, Lee tries to do with montage what he cannot do with dramatic logic. John Leguizamo gives a large-scaled, brilliant performance as Vinny, the hairdresser and disco king who cheats on his beautiful wife (Mira Sorvino). With Adrien Brody as Ritchie, who leaves the neighborhood and returns as a bisexual punk rocker with spiked hair.—*D.D.* (7/12/99) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII.)

Tarzan—Raised by apes, the new, animated Tarzan walks with his heavy shoulders leaning forward and his knuckles dragging along the ground. He's the most apelike of Tarzans: animation, which Edgar Rice Burroughs's material seems to have been waiting for, frees the Disney filmmakers to mix animal and human characteristics without embarrassment. And it frees them to use nature not as a static background with lots of available vines but as a seethingly active habitat. Glen Keane, the chief animator here, has said that he was inspired by watching his skateboarding son. This Tarzan doesn't swing from trees but courses rapidly from branch to branch, glen to glen—he treats the tree canopy and the thick undergrowth below as if they were the swells and hollows of the ocean. At its best, the movie is an exhilarating, surf-topping ride. With Minnie Driver providing the voice of a deliciously flirtatious Jane.—*D.D.* (7/5/99) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, East 86th Street Cinemas, Guild, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Village East Cinemas.)

Three Bad Men (1926)—John Ford's re-creation of the Dakota land rush of 1877 is a lollapalooza—a thunderous rampage of lunacy that ranges from a newspaperman printing updates of the action while hurtling through it on a cart to a couple fixing a wheel on their wagon and forgetting to get their baby out of the way of the stampede. The satisfying buildup and aftermath center on the sentiment-filled tale of how a trio of good bad guys and a gallant knight of the tumbleweeds (George O'Brien) protect an orphaned beauty from an evil sheriff who dresses like a flamenco dancer and is made up like a vampire. Silent.—*M.S.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 17.)

Wild Wild West—Gizmos, Gatlings, and wrought-iron whatnots. This piece of overproduced maniacal whimsy is set in the Grant Administration and features a Jules Verne system of design, heavy on gadgetry and industrial fantasy. The devices are intriguing, but they flash by without having much effect. The story has something to do with a legless madman (Kenneth Branagh) who wants to destroy the United States and the two federal agents (Will Smith and Kevin Kline) who try to stop him. The movie is exhausting, utterly without feeling, and pointless—though Smith looks great in his Western outfit. Written by six persons who cannot tell a story. Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld. Cinematography by Michael Ballhaus.—*D.D.* (7/12/99) (Astor Plaza, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANALYZE THIS: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **AUTUMN TALE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **BESIEGED:** 34th Street Showplace and Village East Cinemas. . . . **DEFYING GRAVITY:** Quad Cinema. . . . **ELECTION** (reviewed in our issue of 4/26 & 5/3/99): Murray Hill Cinemas and Village East Cinemas. . . . **ENTRAPMENT:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER:** Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **LIFE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LIMBO:** 64th and 2nd and Village East Cinemas. . . . **LOVE ETC.:** The Screening Room. . . . **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** (5/17/99): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **RUN LOLA RUN:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE** (12/21/98): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **TEA WITH MUSSOLINI:** Chelsea Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE WINSLOW BOY** (5/17/99): BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—July 14: "Written on the Wind" (1956, Douglas Sirk). . . . July 15-17: "Imitation of Life" (1959, Sirk). . . . July 18-20: "Magnificent Obsession" (1954, Sirk).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films directed by George Cukor. July 15 at 2:30: "Our Betters" (1933). . . . July 15 at 6: "It Should Happen to You" (1953). . . . July 16 at 2:30: "Born Yesterday" (1950). . . . ¶ A program of films distributed by the Strand Releasing Company over the past ten years. July 15 at 6 and July 17 at 5: "Magdalena Viraga: Story of a Red Sea Crossing" (1986, Nina Menkes). . . . July 16 at 3: "All the Vermeers in New York" (1990, Jon Jost). . . . July 16 at 6 and July 18 at 2:30: Four short films. . . . July 17 at 2:30 and July 20 at 6: "Jeanne and the Perfect Guy" (1998, Olivier Ducastel; in French). . . . July 18 at 5: "Macho Dancer" (1988, Lino Brocka). . . . July 19 at 6: "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" (†). . . . ¶ A program of films significant to the development of cinema but not currently in the the museum's collection. July 16 at 7 and July 17 at 1:30: "A Star Is Born" (1954, George Cukor). . . . July 17 at 5 and July 19 at 2:30: "The Women" (1939, Cukor). . . . July 18 at 2 and July 20 at 2:30: "The Wizard of Oz" (1939, Victor Fleming). . . . July 18 at 5 and July 19 at 6: "Auntie Mame" (1958, Morton DaCosta). . . . July 20 at 6: "Mister Roberts" (1955, John Ford and Mervyn LeRoy).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Max Ophuls. July 14 at 1, 4:30, and 7:45 and July 15 at 2:30: "The Company in Love" (1931; in German). . . . July 14 at 2:45 and 6 and July 15 at 1 and 4: "The Tender Enemy" (1936; in French). . . . ¶ July 15 at 6:30: "A Day in Black and White" (1999, Desmond Hall). . . . ¶ From July 16: The New York Video Festival.

BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—Films by Robert Bresson; in French, with English subtitles. July 14 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Balthazar" (1966). . . . July 19 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Pickpocket" (1959). . . . July 20 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "A Man Escaped" (†). . . . ¶ A program of films by Spike Lee. July 15 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Freak" (1998). . . . July 16 at 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Girl 6" (1996). . . . July 17 at 1:30, 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Clockers" (1995). . . . July 18 at 1:30, 4, 6:45, and 9:20: "Crooklyn" (1994).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of John Ford Westerns. July 17 at 2: "Three Bad Men" (†). . . . July 17 at 4: "Drums Along the Mohawk" (1939). . . . July 18 at 2: "My Darling Clementine" (†). . . . July 18 at 4: "The Three Godfathers" (1948).

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with coming attractions, trailers, and cartoons. The feature on July 19 will be "Dr. Strangelove" (1964, Stanley Kubrick). (For rain-date information, call 512-5700.)

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 20 at 12:30, 3:30, and 6:30: "C'est la Vie" (1990, Diane Kurys; in French)....July 20 at 9: "Inner City" (1995, Jean-François Richet; in French).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On July 18 at 7, the feature will be "Dog Day Afternoon" (†).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—July 15-16 at 7 and 9:30, July 17 at 5 and 7:30, July 18-19 at 6 and 8:30, and July 20 at 8: "The Thing Called Love" (1993, Peter Bogdanovich)....July 16 at 8:15 and July 17 at 2 and 4:30: "Girl with a Suitcase" (1961, Valerio Zurlini; in Italian)....July 16 at 10:30: Short films by Stan Brakhage....July 17 at 7 and July 18 at 2: "Pizzicata" (1996, Edoardo Winspeare; in Italian)....July 18 at 7 and 9: Short films by George and Mike Kuchar.

Films on the Piers—Films made in New York City are being shown (free, with free popcorn) on two of the city piers. "Annie Hall" (1977, Woody Allen): July 14 at 8:30 on Pier 54 (at 13th Street) and July 16 at 8:30 on Pier 25 (at North Moore Street). (There are no rain dates.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

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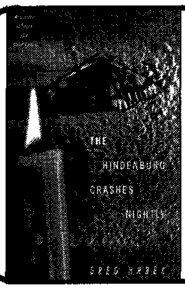

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"Rich, intricate, heartfelt..."
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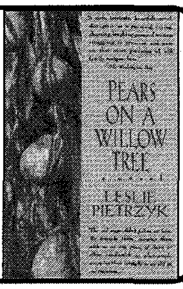
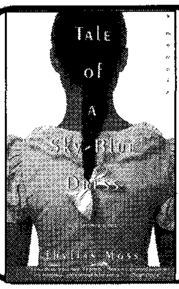
An insightful first novel of the relationships among four generations of Polish women, bound together by ancestry but separated by a gulf of cultural differences.





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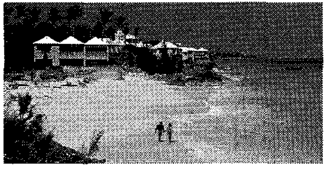

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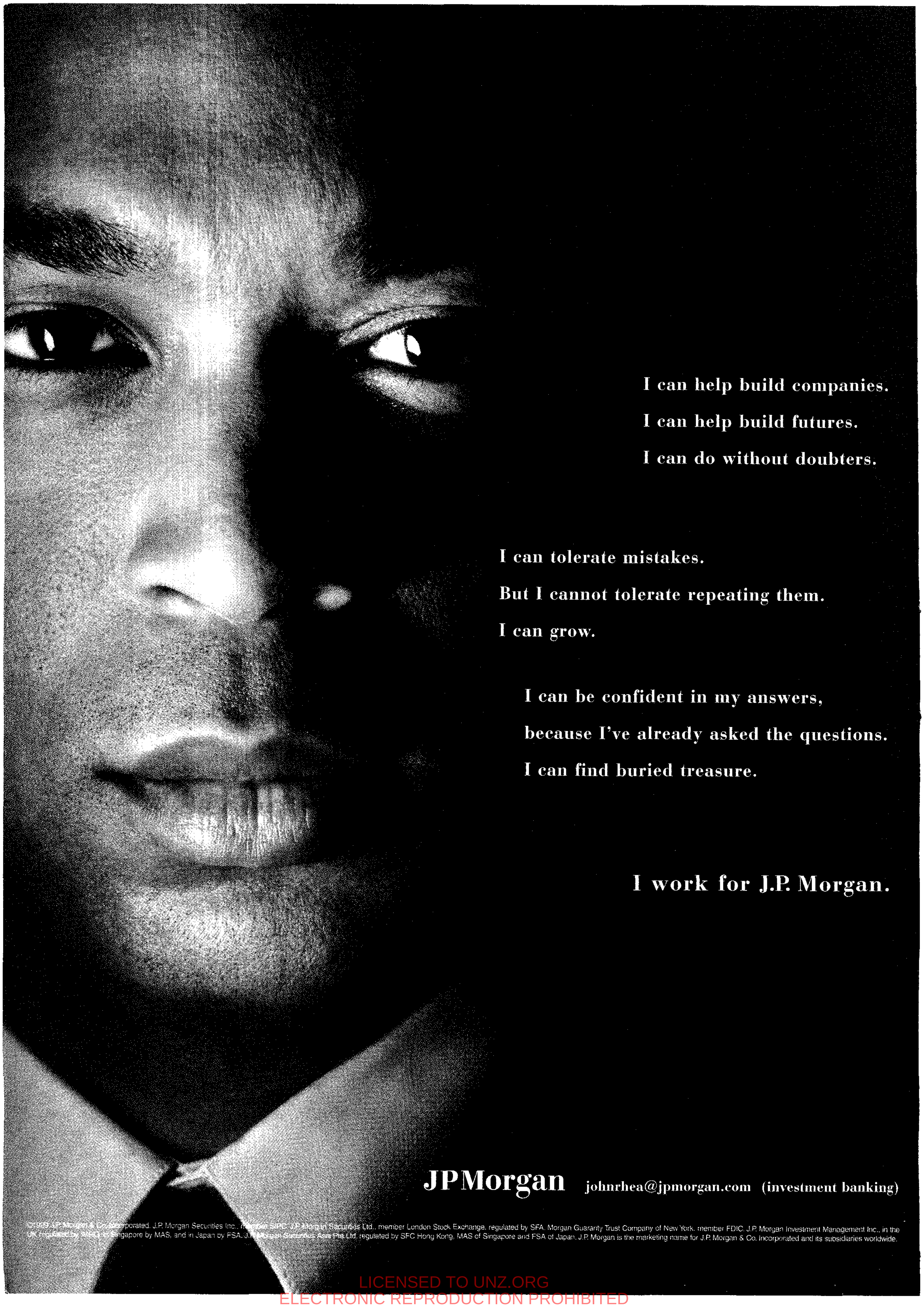

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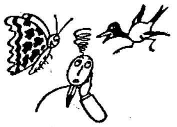
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Animals behaving badly.



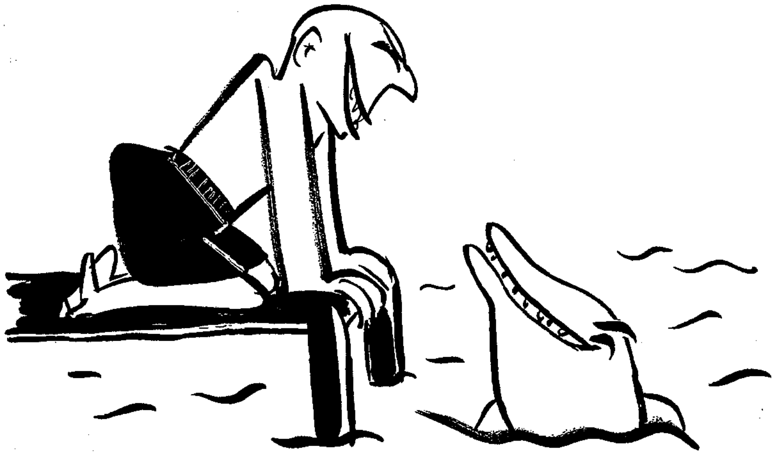
SCIENCE, having done in the innocent ape, the noble savage, and the misty poetic cosmos, has now come for the dolphin. If the *Times* is right, it appears that Flipper, far from being the gentle, heroic do-gooder we grew up with, always ready to unhook the bomb from beneath the freckled kid's boat and then scoot away with it on his beak—our own Flipper, with his Bobby Kennedy smile and his Julie Andrews-style bleatings—is, in fact, ready for his Spike Lee closeup: nasty and aggressive, with fratricidal passions and a plain mean disposition. ("Who you callin' bottlenose?") According to the *Times*, "The emerging consensus is that wild dolphins can be cold-blooded killers." Apparently, they not only kill porpoises—porpoise corpses keep washing up with dolphin teeth marks on them—for no good reason that anyone can find; they also kill other dolphins' babies. (With typical obtuseness, scientists think that the real mystery here is why dolphins would pick on porpoises, though this is not a mystery at all. Dolphins kill porpoises for the same reason that William Gaddis must have spent half his time wanting to strangle William Gass, for the same reason that John Kerry can't stand Bob Kerrey: the person in the world we most hate is the guy we are perpetually confused with.)

This loss of the dolphin as an image—what people in California call an archetype—of niceness, or non-peopleness, comes at a time when a lot of us are still mourning the loss of the chimpanzee, the dolphin's equal as a thinker (that's in the *Times*, too), and, until not long ago, another contestant for Nature's Lady Byng Trophy. If you recall, the chimp was held up as a rascally and competitive but essentially decent primate, huddling in trees and hugging its kids, a stranger to war and homicide. This turns out to be not just untrue but wildly untrue. Chimps, the scientists now tell us, divide into troops, and then hunt each other down ruthlessly and brutally—J. Slobodan Muggs.

Evidently, at the end of the century, everybody we thought was essentially good is going to turn out to be essentially rotten, from Flipper to Timothy Leary. The whole history of twentieth-century thought can be seen as a search for Mr. Nice Guy, for the primal innocent we're not but ought to be. It seems, however, that no matter where we range up and down the chain of being, there's nothing but crud. The Samoans, Margaret Mead's pick as the gentle, uncompetitive, sexually emancipated pastoral, are apparently as testy as a group of Republican congressmen. The South American Indians whom we were taught to see as the innocent victims of the Spaniards turn out to be murderers; and the ones up north, whom we were taught to see as innocent victims of us, turn out to be cannibals.

At least the special awfulness of people looks less special now. Stephen Jay Gould, a man who knows a good controversy, announced in the pages of the *Times*, just around the time that the news of the evil dolphins broke, that, since it has been shown that chimps use tools, teach their young, etc., the "golden barrier" between people and non-people has fallen. When it comes to culture, Professor Gould said, there's not much difference between people and chimps—a thought that had occurred to a lot of us independently after seeing "Entrapment."

The good news, perhaps, is that if there is no golden barrier, there is no crud barrier, either. Twenty years or so ago, every natural-history museum in America used to work the same basic stunt. A sign would promise the display of the world's most destructive animal, the fifth graders would turn a corner, hearts pounding, and there would be a mirror: you're it. In fifth grade, everybody got a big kick out of



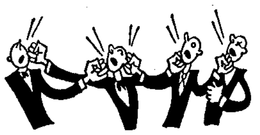
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

this. Today, we're still worse than the competition, but it's catching up. Humanism, that dog-eared, hard-hit faith, used to be based on the notion that man was pretty good and getting better. Maybe now we can make a new kind of humanism, based on the realization that none of the other animals are so hot, either. The global motto need no longer be "People: As Good As It Gets" but "Human Beings: Just About the Same As Everything That Breathes." Or, better still, the real humanist slogan for the millennium: "So Whaddya Expect—Perfection?" We recommend this slogan. After all, it has already worked for the President.

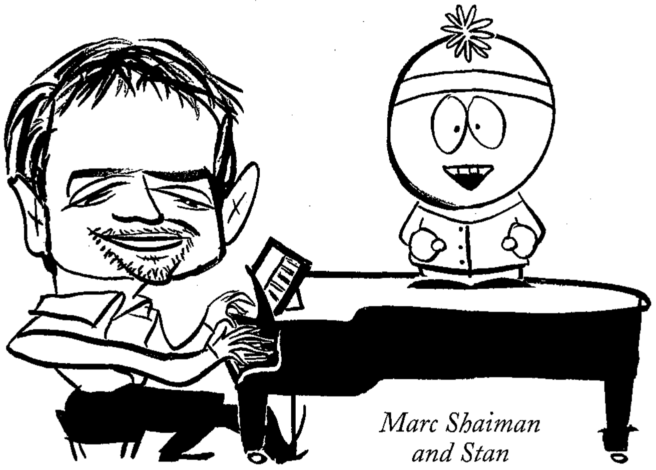
—ADAM GOPNIK

THE MUSICAL LIFE

The maestro behind "South Park" 's arpeggios of flatulence.



BECAUSE the territory of the Hollywood musical has, in the past thirty years, been more or less ceded to Walt Disney Pictures, a composer rarely gets the opportunity to write a feature-length score. Even rarer is the opportunity to incorporate therein a peppy number whose subject is incest and whose orchestration includes elaborately harmonious flatulence. Such was the chance presented to Marc Shaiman when he was hired to collaborate with Trey Parker, one of the creators of the potty-minded television show "South Park," on the soundtrack for a movie spinoff, the new animated musical "South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut."



Marc Shaiman and Stan

"We had the idea that you could do something similar to a big tap-dance break, only with the sound of farts," Shaiman explained by telephone the other day from his summer home in Laguna Beach. Parker and his partner Matt Stone sent him a tape of every such sound effect that they use on the show. "They have a whole library," he said. "I sat there and listened for those that were most percussive, or had a bit of rhythm in their ripple, and I cut them up and played with them and sped them up, and created this whole tap-dance-style rhythm break." The result was "Uncle Fucka," one of the movie's standout numbers, and one that your thirteen-year-old son is sure to be singing all summer, though not, one hopes, at large family gatherings.

Shaiman, who has received four Academy Award nominations for his music for movies, including "Sleepless in Seattle" and "The First Wives Club," was already a fan of "South Park" when he was asked to work on the film, and was delighted to discover that Trey Parker shared his love of musical theatre. "I think one of his biggest thrills was the day he and Matt came and heard a ninety-five-piece orchestra playing 'Uncle Fucka,'" Shaiman said. Some of the musicians, it seems, did not share that sentiment. "I heard the violinists walking out and saying, 'Eight years in the conservatory . . . ,'" he recalled.

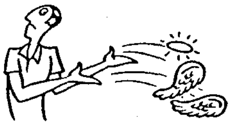
The score features a number of sophisticated musical-theatre references, Shaiman explained. The opening twenty bars, set to a wide pan of the snow-covered town of South Park, are intended to evoke "The Sound of Music," and the jaunty first number, a celebratory hymn to home ("You can see your breath hanging in the air/ You see homeless people but you just don't care"), is an homage to "Oklahoma!" The character of Satan, who is having a homosexual relationship with Saddam Hussein in Hell but really wants to ascend to Earth, sings a schmaltzy number entitled "Up There," which is, Shaiman said, his "Little Mermaid" moment. "Every Disney movie has—and I have even heard it referred to in the halls of Disney this way—the 'I want' song," he said. "Trey loved the idea that Satan had the 'I want' song."

As it happened, the composition of the "South Park" score coincided with Shaiman's most recent Oscar nomination, for "Patch Adams," which made for some interesting table chat at the nominees' luncheon whenever anyone asked what he was working on. He recalled, "I would just smirk and try to explain, and people would look at me with these 'Springtime for Hitler' looks on their faces."

—REBECCA MEAD

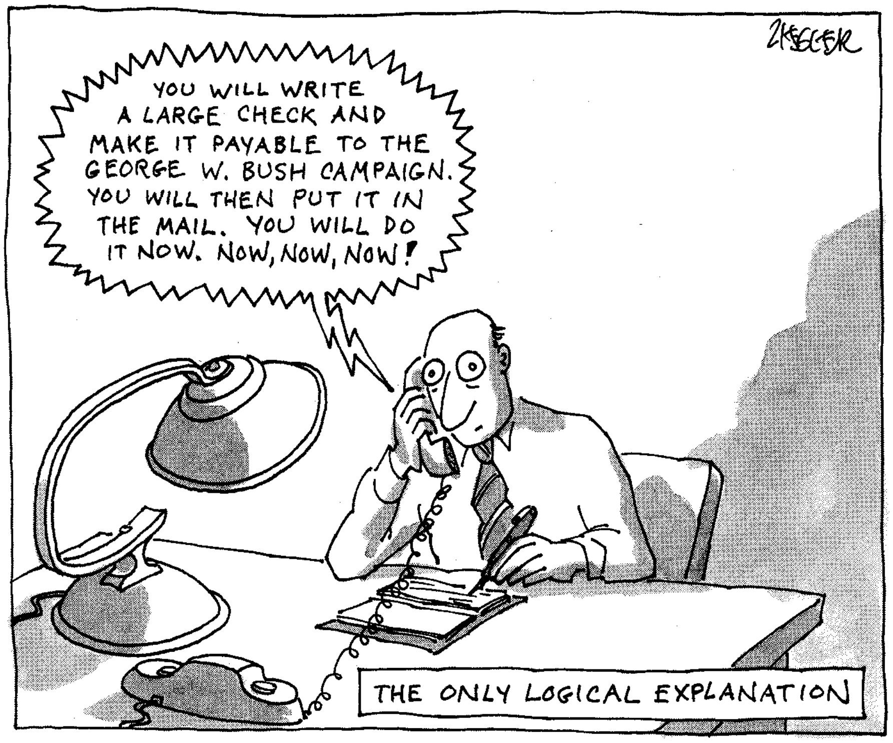
WEATHER REPORT

What's hotter than Hell?



DURING last week's heat wave, the New York media got religion. The *News* spoke of "hellishly hot" temperatures, while the *Post* suggested that the heat index "should be renamed the hell index." But could it be that the tabloids fumbled their metaphors—that a heat index of a hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit (registered in Central Park on July 5th) is more heavenly than hellish?

Sometime around 1930, Henry T. Wensel, an employee of the National Bureau of Standards, set about calculating the temperatures he might expect to encounter in the afterlife. For four decades, his conclusions circulated quietly, before they appeared in an anonymous letter in the August, 1972, edition of the technical journal *Applied Optics*. The calculations were relatively straightforward. Hell contains, as described in Revelation 21:8, a "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." For such a lake to exist, the letter's author reasoned, Hell cannot be any warmer than the boiling point of brimstone (or sulfur), which is eight hundred and thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit.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THE ONLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION

• •

Heaven is a bit more complicated. Isaiah 30:26 reads, "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." As the letter writer summarized it, "Heaven receives from the moon as much radiation as we do from the sun and in addition seven times seven (forty-nine) times as much as the earth does from the sun, or fifty times in all." Using something called the Stefan-Boltzmann fourth-power law for radiation, the author derived the temperature of Heaven, which came out to be a staggering nine hundred and seventy-seven degrees Fahrenheit. Heaven, it seemed, is hotter than Hell.

There had, of course, always been clues that Heaven wasn't particularly cold—the dearth of Renaissance paintings featuring angels in heavy clothing, for example—but nine hundred and seventy-seven degrees? Might Hell be the better option? In fact, if Dante is to be relied on, Satan himself functions as a sort of giant Vornado, cooling Hell's lowest level to an icy chill. There are doubtless many drawbacks to spending eternity with the Devil, among them endless labor, repetitive torture, and loud neighbors. But, if life is a series of trade-offs, perhaps the afterlife is, too.

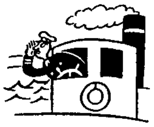
Throughout the nineteen-seventies, there was some discussion among scientists about the temperature of Hell. Several people noted that the boiling point of sulfur could be higher, depending on the level of pressure in Hell, which is likely to be high, since a steady, one-way stream of doomed souls has continued to arrive in the underworld. But no evidence emerged to mitigate the Heaven problem.

Thus it was a welcome surprise when two Spanish physicists and an Auxiliary Bishop of Madrid found a way around the quandary. In a letter published in a recent issue of *Physics Today*, Jorge Mira Pérez and José Viña concluded, after theological consultation with the bishop, that previous calculations "took Heaven's radiation from the Sun to be 7 x 7 times more intense than on Earth, whereas the Isaiah passage clearly states that the light of the Sun falling on Heaven is only 7 times greater, not 49 times." The good news is that Hell is now indisputably hotter than Heaven. The bad news is that Heaven is still a sweltering four hundred and forty-nine degrees Fahrenheit. But that makes New York in the summertime not such an unpleasant Purgatory after all.

—GEOFF SHANDLER

FLY ON THE WALL DEPT.

Up close at the fireworks, sort of.



Q: I understand you watched the Macy's fireworks show on the East River last week.

A: Well, in a manner of speaking. I was on one of the fireworks barges, just down from the Brooklyn Bridge.

Q: The best seat in the house, eh?

A: Well, not quite. The fact is that during the show I was in a large (eight by eight by twenty) steel container.

Q: May I ask an obvious question? What were you doing in a large steel container during the fireworks?

A: It wasn't what I had in mind. But when I got to the old Navy pier on Staten Island, where they load the barges, I was told that regulations had been tightened after some fatal accidents in Memphis and Chicago. I was taken into the container and shown a vertical slit perhaps an inch wide and three inches deep. At showtime, I could look through the slit and watch the shells coming out of the mortars on the foredeck.

Q: Did it occur to you at that moment to get back in your car and leave?

A: Not really. I resigned myself to life in the container, which functions as a kind of control center.

Q: What did you do on the barge?

A: Well, our captain, Scott Raso, gave me a tour of the mortars. The names of the shells are exotic, often somewhat sinister: Multicolored Break and Screaming, Red Crackling Flower, Dragon Egg, Yellow Spider, Blossom After Thunder. We went down the line of eight-inch mortars and Scott reached in and pulled out one of the shells, its wires trailing. Oriental shells are round, like melons, with a little bulge at the base which contains the lifting charge. I must admit, no matter how many I've seen, my pulse races at the sight of a large shell—as if what Scott had done was pull something sleeping but deadly from its burrow. We looked at some specialty shells that break and form the letters "M," "A," "C," "Y'," "S" in the sky. The problem is that it's almost impossible to control the letters—the "M" can break upside down, so that you get something that looks like "WACY'S"—hardly what was intended.

Q: I should think not. What was the largest shell Scott showed you?

A: An Italian shell. The shells from the Western countries are cylinder-shaped. This one was almost two feet long and weighed about fifteen pounds. It was called Two White Flutter Spiders and Green Peony. Scott called it the Big Salami. I've always wanted to spend my retirement years sitting in a little chair, looking up and naming shells. The Chinese pyrotechnics firms are the most imaginative. I know of a shell called the Monkeys Invade the Heavenly Palace and Chase Out the Tiger. I have a name I'd like to write down one day on a piece of rice paper: Blue Ox Comes Down the Turnpike.

Q: So what happened next?

A: We gathered around Scott, who sat in front of a laptop computer, a square metal box, and a little key, about the size of the kind you use to open a minibar in a hotel room. You turn that and press a button on the module box and you've armed the system. At this point, the computer takes over. The whole show—twenty-four thousand shells fired from six barges—is programmed into computers.

Q: In these days of hackers, could someone get into the system and set off the show just as, say, Mayor Giuliani was going by in a boat?

A: I asked that question (minus the Giuliani reference), and Scott said that the system wasn't on-line, which makes it pretty much invulnerable.

Q: So you're in the container . . .

A: About five minutes before the start of the show, everyone put on goggles and hard hats, and I sat down in a plastic chair inside the container. You think you're ready for the noise, but the onslaught was so violent that I half rose out of my chair in alarm. Scott, sitting at his laptop, would shout out through the din, "The Big Salami's coming up. Five seconds, four, three, two, one . . . ," and the barge would jar as if we'd run aground on a rock.

Q: What did you see out of the slit?

A: It was dark, of course, but occasionally there was light from what was going on above, so I could see the rows of pipelike mortars—rather like, it occurred to me, looking out on Dickensian rooftops in a madcap electrical storm, the chimneys gone berserk and shooting back.

Q: Dickens, eh? Did you venture outside?

A: Yes. I was allowed at one point to stand in the half-open doorway and look up. I got a quick glimpse of some shells called Twinkling Kamuros—exploding a great umbrella-like spread of gold tendrils that fell slowly down to the river. *Kamuro* means "boy's haircut" in Japanese, but unless the kids let their hair grow longer than I've ever noticed, it's not especially descriptive.

Q: How long was the show?

A: Just under a half hour. When it was over—that sudden, almost worrisome silence—we stepped out of the container and we could hear the applause across the water. Then the boats inshore let loose with their horns. The smoke drifted away. The skyscrapers suddenly seemed close, looming over us. We all looked at Scott as if he were a magician. —GEORGE PLIMPTON

THE WAYWARD PRESS

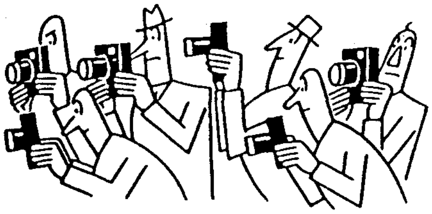
A bird? A plane? A liberal journal.

NEXT fall, a mild-mannered public-policy journal will step into a phone booth, shuck its tweed jacket, and emerge, cape flowing and muscles bulging, as . . . Superliberal! The Clark Kent of the story is *The American Prospect*, which for the past nine years, first as a quarterly and then as a bimonthly, has been publishing long articles on worthy topics like Social Security reform and the global economy from a basement in Cambridge, Massachusetts. When the *Prospect* goes into superhero mode, in mid-October, it will quadruple its frequency of publication (to biweekly) and its circulation (from twenty thousand to, its editors hope, an eventual eighty thousand). It will also shorten its deadlines and its articles, move some of its editorial operations to Washington, D.C., and start feeding its more telegenic writers into the 24-7 cable-newschat maw. In short, *The American Prospect* will try to elbow its way into the contentious company of the big-time (if small-circulation) journals of political opinion: *The Weekly Standard* and *National Review* on the right, *The New Republic* on the center-left (and also on the center-right), and *The Nation* on the lefty left.

The American Prospect's co-editor Robert Kuttner sees a lot of running room, politically, between *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. "This is a niche wide enough to drive a truck through!" he said the other day, mangling his metaphors a little in his enthusiasm. Kuttner, who is fifty-six, is a prolific writer and columnist. His co-editors at the *Prospect* are Paul Starr, who is a Princeton sociologist, and Robert B. Reich, who served as Secretary of Labor in the first Clinton Administration and is now at Brandeis. All three have become critics of the Administration, albeit basically friendly ones.

Playing D'Artagnan to these musketeers is Bill Moyers, the television documentarian. At about the same time that Kuttner, Starr, and Reich were starting the *Prospect*, a couple of I.B.M. scions named Robert and Ford Schumann were looking for someone to help them guide their family foundation, and they hooked up with Moyers. For his part, Moyers has been fretting for years about the lack of a weekly or biweekly journal of opinion committed to reviving and rethinking the liberal idea, and has had conversations with a number of editors (the undersigned being one of them) about starting one from scratch. Kuttner had long dreamed of the same grail. So the *Prospect* and the Schumann Foundation were a natural match.

Skinny political weeklies and biweekies always lose money. It's a law of nature. The trick is to find somebody, usually an eccentric-millionaire owner, to cover the losses. "We're giving the *Prospect* a five-point-five-million-dollar grant for the first two years, with more to come if it's working," Moyers said last week, and added, musingly, "I wonder if that's anything like as much as Rupert Murdoch gives *The Weekly Standard*." The Schumann Foundation, Moyers said, will have no control over *The American Prospect*. "It's the editors' magazine. All we'll do is help pay for it, and hope that they can just pick out one corner of Washington and make it as sane as possible." Talk about eccentric millionaires! —HENDRIK HERTZBERG



THE CAMPAIGN

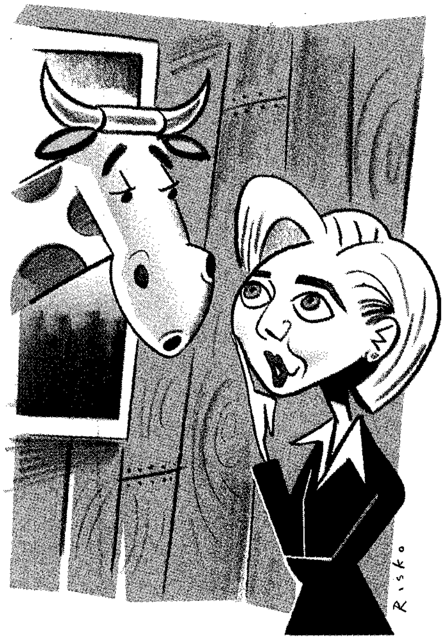
A candidate keeps cool.

To speak and say nothing is an art. What it requires is not self-abnegation so much as an exaggerated form of self-assurance, an ability to animate, almost by will alone, the blandest of vacuities. It is a test of poise and concentration and resolve, as an experienced geisha—or politician—can attest.

Last week, in Pindars Corners, Hillary Rodham Clinton embarked on her "Listening Tour of New York." It was the opening gesture of her all-but-inevitable Senate candidacy and just the opposite of the conventional campaign kickoff. Instead of orchestrated drama—the big speech in front of the cheering, balloon-toting crowd—there was only anticlimax, brilliantly staged. The two hundred members of the media who had arrived to record the first step in her historic race found themselves waiting in the middle of a newly mown hayfield while down the road, in an old one-room schoolhouse, the First Lady conferred privately with Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan—or, who knows, perhaps just gossiped with friends on her cell phone. When the two finally strolled up to where the reporters were assembled, the mob tried to force Mrs. Clinton to say something, anything, for the evening news, throwing out, in quick succession, provocative questions about carpetbagging, Monica, and the right design for the Peace Bridge connecting Canada and Buffalo. She, however, remained as cool and elusive as the journalists were desperate.

By that afternoon, the comic incongruity of camera crews reduced to filming each other while reporters vied for interviews with local kids selling lemonade gave way to something still more punishing. Hillary, it turned out, really did intend to listen. Five citizens of Oneonta had been assembled in a meeting room at the State University to talk about what mattered to them. Ben Friedell, a local doctor, spoke about the importance of public education; Steve Waller, a college student, shared his reasons for wanting to become a teacher; Elena Doyle, a small-business owner, described the difficulty of finding good help among local young people.

"The one problem that I've noticed throughout all the years I've been in business in Oneonta is social skills and emotional intelligence," Doyle said at one point, because it was something she cared about. "The problem of people answering the phones, unbelievable. . . . I say to them, 'If you cannot relate in this little town, what will happen when you get out there and really see what the world is and don't have someone like me for a boss that takes you in the back and coddles you?' "



From my vantage point, wedged up against an end table, I could barely see Mrs. Clinton's face, but every time she turned my way she was, it seemed, nodding emphatically, fairly radiating earnest concern. She was concerned about pre-kindergarten education, about access to dental care, about better marketing of dairy products, and, of course, about the problem of answering the phones. Half an hour into this ninety-minute exercise, I counted three reporters fast asleep.

The luxury of Mrs. Clinton's campaign is that she does not, in the traditional sense, need the media. She can eschew drama, refuse to speak in sound bites, spend weeks exploring the dark continent that lies between Utica and Malone, all without fear of falling into obscurity. Even before the opening rout at Pindars Corners, journalists were showing justifiable signs of anxiety. I met several of my colleagues in the corridors of the Albany Marriott the night before the First Lady's arrival, and they all confessed to a queasy feeling. Had we gathered for the most sensational political story of the year, or was it more like one of those sting operations that proffer free Yankees tickets to gullible fugitives?

So far, Mrs. Clinton's candidacy is based on a logic that is, quite frankly, circular, or, in its maddening topology, perhaps more like a Möbius strip. When she or her aides are pressed on how she can presume to run in a state she has never lived in, the programmatic reply is that what is important is "where you stand, not where you are from." When they're pressed on where she stands, the answer is no less automatic: she has come to New York not to impose her views but to "listen to New Yorkers." She talked throughout the day about the issues she is committed to, which, she suggested, were the very same issues she is hoping to learn about. "All I can say is that I care deeply about the issues that are important in this state that I've already been learning about and hearing about," she told the reporters on Moynihan's farm.

By day two of her tour, Mrs. Clinton's media strategy was showing some signs of strain, as reporters, searching for something besides her "listening sessions" to cover, came up with a letter she had written to Jewish leaders a week earlier on moving the Israeli capital to Jerusalem. No doubt there will be more such contretemps. Still, you have to credit the First Lady, or at least her advisers, with cunning. As has been widely noted, her popularity has always had less to do with the causes she has championed than with the abuses she has borne stoically. In this sense, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, with his native bellicosity, is an ideal opponent, and so, too, is a captious press.

—Elizabeth Kolbert

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

CUOMO'S MOJO

The Governor's son inherited his father's political gifts—does he have his liabilities, too?

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

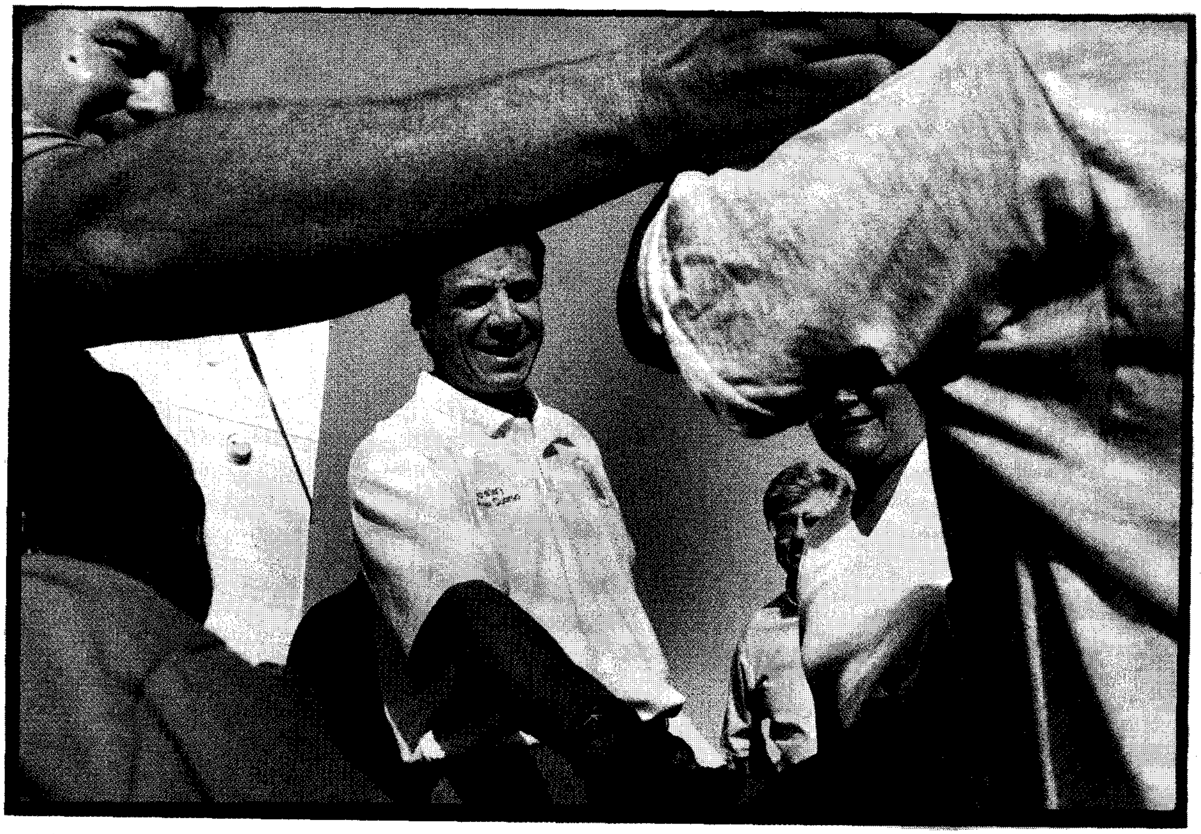
IT'S the position of the index finger that is so disquieting. It extends outward, like a pretend gun, but is held parallel to the chest, pointing nowhere in particular. Following a clockwise motion, it describes a half circle, starting near the body and ending, quickly but deliberately, about a hand's breadth away. The whole motion translates roughly as "and then," but it implies that what comes next does not follow easily from what has come before, that it takes a great deal of energy and commitment and perhaps force of will to get from one point to the other. Can a gesture like this be taught, like a dance step, or is it something more like a crooked smile, passed down without thought, or even desire?

Andrew Cuomo is, in all sorts of uncanny ways, his father's son. When he is explaining something, practically every motion is familiar, not just the arc of the index finger but the reflexive temple-scratch and the chopping movement of both hands that is used for emphasis. He speaks in the same cadences, at once incantatory and urgent, and he stresses key phrases in the same way, stretching them out like a question. "Close your eyes," one of Cuomo's aides said to me recently. "Wouldn't you swear it was Mario?" Whatever differences exist, either in appearance or in mannerism, are mostly a matter of scale. Andrew is slighter, and his voice is higher. He talks a bit faster and, maybe simply because of his age, which is forty-one, conveys less gravitas. He can, on occasion, giggle.

For the last two and a half years, Cuomo has headed the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He got the post at least in part thanks to his friendship with Vice-President Al Gore, and should Gore win the Presidency it is widely assumed that Cuomo will be a top contender for White House chief of staff. Long before Hillary Clinton cast her eye on the Senate seat being vacated by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Cuomo seriously considered running for the post, and whether or not Gore wins, friends say, they expect him to run for his father's old job, governor of New York, in 2002 or, at the very latest, 2006.

Within the Clinton Administration, Cuomo has defined himself as a champion of the poor, a role that to a certain extent comes with the job. HUD's mandate is to relieve the effects of poverty, and it spends more than twenty-five billion dollars a year trying to do so. But Cuomo has gone well beyond what is required of him. Several months ago, he commissioned a study that seemed deliberately designed to highlight the shortcomings of the Administration's economic program, and, in April, he presented the findings, along with slides of exemplary hovels, to the National Press Club. Cuomo supplemented the report, subtitled "Places Left Behind in the New Economy," with a series of visits to some of the saddest examples—Guadalupe, Arizona; Gary, Indiana—always with several reporters in tow. Last week, he accompanied President Clinton on a similar tour, through Clarksdale, Mississippi; East St. Louis, Illinois; and the Pine Ridge Reservation, in South Dakota. Finally free from the constraints of running for office, Clinton has turned his attention to the politically unrewarding problems Cuomo has been talking about for several years.

When Cuomo describes the plight of the "places left behind," it is not merely in terms of the economic and social challenges they represent for government agencies. Rather, he engages in a broader, loftier discourse that is, finally, ethical and implicates everyone. "I am talking about a concept of justice which is central to the Constitution," he told the National Press Club. "Lincoln's justice, Bobby Kennedy's justice, F.D.R.'s justice. Economic justice that said you're not a success with your Dow Jones breaking ten thousand when one out of five children sleeps in poverty tonight! That is not success as a nation." There is no question that Cuomo is at his most eloquent precisely when he is at his darkest, and in this, too, he takes after his father. Mario Cuomo was a genius at exploring the gap between what we are and what we should be, and was never more admired than when measuring our moral failures against the ideals we might claim to hold dearest. This talent ideally suited him to his role as the "last liberal hope"; at the moment of its passing, he was the elegist for an ideology. In his son's case, however, the talent is less intelligible as an asset; not only is Andrew smaller and lighter, he is, of course, also later.



Cuomo visits migrant laborers in California. He has been a voice for the poor in Clinton's Cabinet—and Al Gore's campaign.

ED KASHI

NEWBURGH, NEW YORK, is one in a string of cities along the Hudson which thrived when the river was a transportation route and have been slowly dying ever since the construction of the interstate. Today, roughly thirty per cent of the city's residents live below the poverty line, its stately old brownstones are decaying, and the few stores that remain seem to stay open out of inertia rather than any commercial calculation.

One day in May, I accompanied Cuomo to Newburgh on one of his tours of economic distress. I was invited, along with a reporter from the Washington *Post*, to ride with the Secretary in a huge S.U.V., while members of the local press trailed behind. Our first stop was the apartment of a woman named Theresa Parker, a forty-one-year-old teacher's aide and mother of four. The visit had been arranged by Cuomo's aides, and Parker's apartment was an appropriately sorry affair, with broken windows and the sound of leaky plumbing. As we all milled around the living room, it was hard to know exactly how to react. It seemed awfully condescending to stand there and deplore the living conditions of our hostess, yet clearly that was what we were meant to do. Parker herself seemed uncomfortable, but she was stoical. "I would like for my kids to live in a place that they could be proud to bring people to," she told us. "*I'd* like to live in a place I could be proud to bring people into."

We next stopped to see some Civil War-era row houses that were being converted into low-income apartments with the help of HUD money, and we finally ended up at an office-furniture store where local leaders had gathered to meet Cuomo. There he delivered a condensed version of his economic-justice speech and handed the mayor the inevitable oversized economic-development check as the cameras whirred.

Decrepit as it is, Newburgh is not a city that lacks for government aid: only the flow of food stamps, welfare checks, and housing vouchers allows so many people to subsist in a place whose economic base has all but vanished. During Cuomo's visit, Newburgh's mayor pointed out to him some apartments that received an earlier round of government grants; several had fallen into disrepair. The depressing conditions in the city may be the strongest argument for government intervention, but from a certain vantage point they are also the weakest.

Cuomo insists that past failures have taught the federal government important lessons about how to revitalize a community. "We know how to do it," he told the gathering in the furniture store, referring to the investment tax incentives and loan guarantees that have supplanted the old poverty programs. Even when acting as a counterbalance to the marketplace, government, Cuomo believes, can operate with something like the market's efficiency. He maintains this essentially optimistic view even though, when I asked him to name a city that might serve as a model for Newburgh, he couldn't come up with a plausible one.

By contrast, when he listed what he called the "macro trends" that were working against outdated industrial centers like Newburgh, his analysis seemed to me dismayingly convincing. "When businesses became more mobile, they said, 'I want to go where the better weather is; I want to go where there are fewer poor people; I want to go where the quality of life is nicer,'" he told me. "You can't do anything about those."

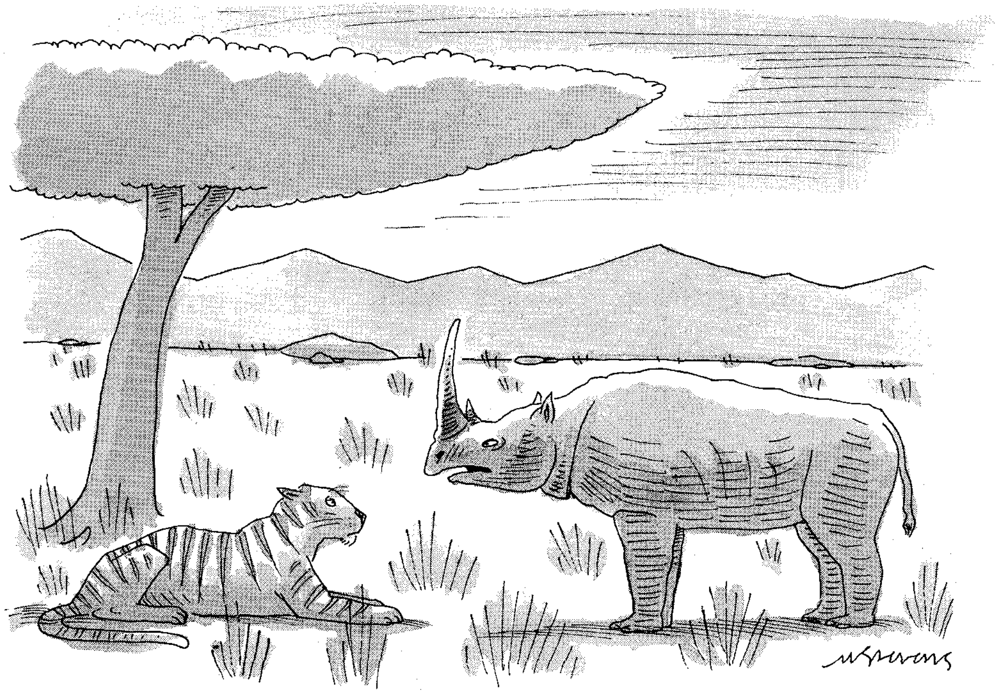
ANDREW CUOMO was twenty-four and just out of Albany Law School when he made a name for himself in politics. In 1982, his father was making his first bid for governor, running against Ed Koch in the Democratic primary, and then against Lew Lehrman in the general election, and he drafted Andrew to help with the campaign. Though an older and more experienced professional was nominally in charge, the campaign staff came to realize that Andrew was the only one who had any real influence. "When you wanted to get a message to Mario, or you needed to revise a decision Mario had made, you did it through Andrew," Sandy Frucher, a longtime friend and aide to the Governor, told me. It was clear that, whatever Andrew's political skills were, his father turned to him because he felt he could trust him, a feeling he famously extended to few others.

Norman Adler also worked on the 1982 campaign, and he recalls Andrew as being unremittingly aggressive on his father's behalf. "He was a very utilitarian kid," said Adler, who is now a New York City lobbyist. "He would tear them up one side and down the other." Many of the slights people remember from this era now seem trivial—things like Andrew yelling at an aide for trying to take a Saturday off to attend a wedding. Still, he absorbed a lot of animosity that might otherwise have been directed at his father, though no one would have accused them of indulging in a good-cop/bad-cop routine—it was more a bad-cop/worse-cop kind of thing.

After the election, Andrew served for a time as a special assistant to the Governor at the low but conspicuously high-principled salary of a dollar a year. Afterward, he worked at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and then in a private law firm before, at the age of twenty-eight, embarking on a new career, in low-income housing. In 1986, he founded Housing Enterprise for the Less Privileged, or HELP, in New York, and within a few years he had quit law to run the organization. He and his father remained close throughout Mario's three terms—even at HELP, Andrew had a special phone line with a direct connection to the Governor—and they remain so today. "We talk constantly," Andrew told me. "There are very few things we don't talk about."

At the time Cuomo founded HELP, homelessness in New York was a growing civic scandal. As one front-page article after another reported, the government was spending up to a hundred dollars a day to board homeless families in rat-infested hotels, often for months at a time. HELP was conceived as both a more humane and a more economical response to the problem. The group would take the money that had been going to the hotels and use it to float bonds to build transitional housing. It would also provide services for the homeless, ranging from addiction counselling to computer courses.

Cuomo's shift from hatchet man to advocate for the homeless was never received as—or, for that matter, even really presented as—a narrative of conversion. In his service to the homeless, Cuomo relied on many of the same bare-knuckle skills that he had used on his father's behalf. Paul Feiner was a member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators in the late nineteen-eighties, when Cuomo was seeking approval to build a HELP project in his district. Community opposition was ferocious, and Feiner was pressing for the project to be scaled back. One evening, when he was on the phone, the operator broke in with an "emergency" call from Cuomo. As Feiner recalled the event to me, Cuomo promised that the community had nothing to fear, but also threatened him, saying, "I'll break every bone in your body" and "I'll destroy your career." The project was eventually approved at the size Cuomo wanted. (Cuomo denies ever having uttered such threats, and one of his press aides, after being asked about the incident, phoned Feiner,



"It's supposed to be some kind of aphrodisiac, but it hasn't done jack for me."

who immediately recanted the version of events he had confirmed just one day earlier. No threats were made, Feiner said in a written statement, and he could not "honestly" remember what words Cuomo used in their conversation.) Advocates for the homeless generally welcomed Cuomo's work, but even they tended to view it as an expression, rather than a sublimation, of his ambition. "The guy loves power," one advocate who worked with Cuomo in this period told me matter-of-factly. I first met Cuomo at this time, when I was covering his father in Albany.

In many ways, HELP was genuinely innovative. Before Cuomo handed over leadership of the group to his sister, Maria Cuomo Cole, in 1993, he had put up ten projects with more than a thousand apartments. Its financing scheme was later copied by other groups, and it helped to develop a new model of temporary housing that eventually reduced New York's reliance on welfare hotels. But, in its broader conception, it followed a familiar pattern: HELP is paternalistic, expensive to run, and heavily reliant on government support. In this sense, HELP, despite its successes, soon came to seem dated. Aides to Cuomo's own father ultimately decided that no more housing projects like HELP's should be built; they simply absorbed too many resources.

ALL Andrew Cuomo stories, it seems, are told many times, and there is a much repeated one about the day he was confirmed as Secretary of HUD. His younger brother, Christopher, was in the audience and listened as one senator after another grilled Andrew on what he planned to do to correct HUD's myriad failings. As the story goes, Andrew asked his brother afterward how he had held up. Christopher reportedly said, "I think you should call the President right away and say you made a mistake. You don't want this department. It has too many problems."

HUD has been a mess almost since it was created, in 1965; for years, the department's books were in such disarray that it had trouble putting together its own budget. Under President Reagan, HUD was essentially ransacked as high-level officials doled out grants to the politically connected, and when Republicans took control of Congress, five years ago, the department's standing was so low that there was much talk of abolishing it. To mollify critics, Clinton's first housing secretary, Henry Cisneros, agreed to cut thousands of employees.

Cuomo, who had been the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development, succeeded Cisneros. He has since dealt with the agency's problems by publicly embracing them, even though this gesture has often carried an implicit criticism of his predecessor. "I built all that housing; I never used a HUD program," he told me. "So when they would badmouth HUD, I knew exactly what they were talking about, because I felt the same thing." He has devoted most of his tenure to reorganizing the department, which is not, Cuomo likes to observe, glamorous work. "Nobody could like sitting in the HUD building in Washington, D.C., for two years, going through management flow charts," he said. "Nobody."

By dwelling on the problems of the urban poor and government's obligation to solve them, Cuomo has pointedly chosen to define himself against the prevailing New Democratic values of the Administration. Yet when it comes to many of the specific programs he has advocated at HUD—tax incentives for businesses that locate in the inner city and greater flexibility for local governments in using federal money—he is very much in synch with the President and the Vice-President. Gore lobbied for Cuomo to succeed Cisneros, and, as the 2000 campaign approaches, he and Cuomo speak often, regularly getting together at the Vice-President's home to shoot pool and talk shop. "Andrew makes the V.-P. laugh," Lorraine Voles, Gore's former communications director, explained. "He gives him good political advice. I think he lightens him up a little bit."

A lot of the changes that Cuomo has made at HUD seem pretty basic. One of the department's major functions is to provide mortgage insurance to home-buyers who would be unable to get it from private carriers, and Cuomo has finally managed to computerize this work and consolidate it in four regional centers. He has also instituted the first regular inspections for the buildings that

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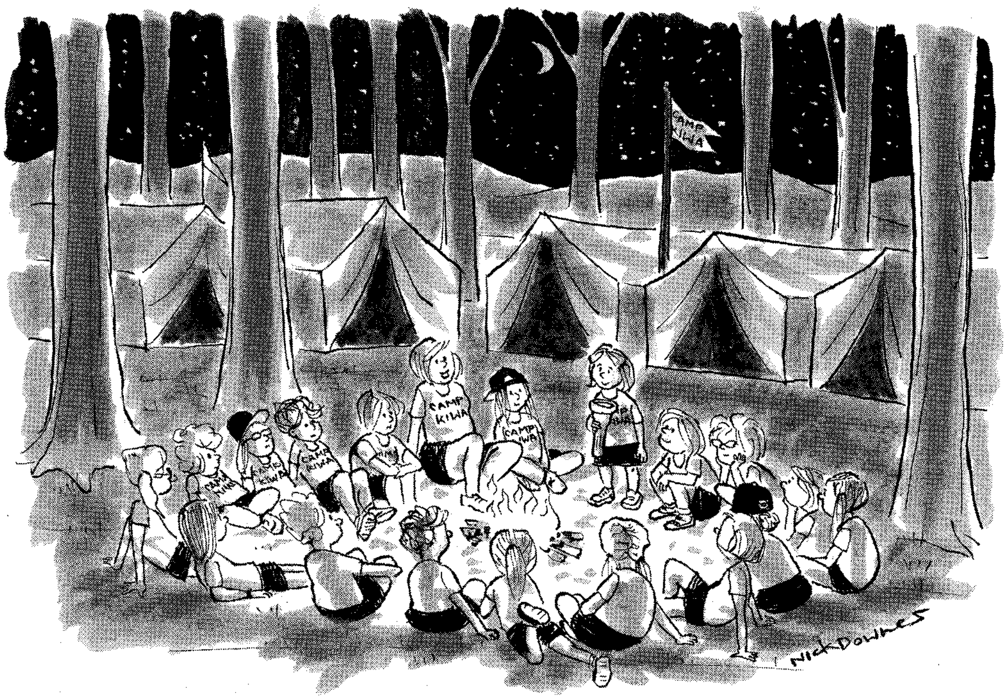


"Very scary, Jennifer—does anyone else have an H.M.O. horror story?"

HUD pays billions of dollars a year to subsidize, and has set up a new enforcement office to pursue derelict landlords. "We're no longer going to fund slums," he told me. Many of these reforms are only a year old, and it is too soon to tell whether they will translate into significantly better housing. Senator Wayne Allard, a Colorado Republican who is the chairman of the housing subcommittee, told me that he still considers HUD a "troubled" agency. Meanwhile, the United States General Accounting Office, which evaluates federal agencies, has continued to list HUD as "high-risk," meaning that it is vulnerable to waste, fraud, or mismanagement.

This kind of assessment infuriates Cuomo. He and his aides assert that he has "turned around" the department—a phrase that was repeated to me incessantly when I visited the HUD offices last month. Any disagreements on this point, Cuomo suggested, were ideological. "The existence of HUD says we should help poor people," he told me. "It is a controversial proposition by its very existence. So the conservatives always see HUD as a lightning rod, and that will never change."

Public perceptions of HUD clearly have real consequences for the department, and for Cuomo himself. Yet even these pragmatic concerns don't fully explain the lengths to which he is willing to go in order to insist on his version of the story. One former congressional aide told me that Cuomo had personally called staff members on the Hill, demanding to know why routine hearings on HUD were being held. For virtually his entire tenure, he has been involved in a highly public and embarrassing dispute with HUD's own inspector general, who has refused to declare Cuomo's management-reform plan an unqualified success.

As with his father, one senses in Cuomo a desire for control that extends a half step beyond where practical calculation leaves off. Late last year, for example, when the G.A.O. issued a draft of its "high-risk" assessment of HUD, Cuomo had his deputy write a response. The letter, which was much circulated in Washington, declared grandiosely that HUD had done more in two years to reform itself "than virtually any public or private institution has done in a similar time frame in recent memory," and continued in this vein for an astonishing seventy-three pages.

THE United States Conference of Mayors held its annual meeting last month in New Orleans, and on its second day Cuomo flew in to deliver a speech on the state of the cities. I caught up with him a few hours beforehand, when he was sitting around with a half-dozen aides in HUD's suite at the Fairmont Hotel. He was tanned from just having been to Central America to check up on various disaster-relief efforts and was, as always, impeccably dressed. He seemed relaxed and in an expansive mood.

Cuomo can be charming and funny in a dark, sarcastic sort of way, and, at least in front of me, he treated his aides with teasing good humor. But HUD is not considered an easy place to work. Cuomo is known to be a demanding boss who expects his staff to be available pretty much at all times. Even though he is now a Cabinet secretary, he continues to function as if he were in the midst of a political campaign, revising speeches until the last minute and taking a disproportionate interest in media coverage. He tends to operate within a relatively narrow circle of advisers, and in the dozen years that I have covered politics I have never heard anyone's staff members referred to so often by others as "minions."

During the day that I spent with Cuomo in New Orleans, he spoke of his father frequently, and only partly because I asked about him. Owing to Cuomo's packed schedule, there had been no time during the day to eat, and while we were on our way to the airport one of his deputies and I complained of hunger. Cuomo handed us a bag of Doritos, which, he said, he ate "out of respect for Mario," who once did an ad for the chips.

Cuomo never refers to his father as his father, and clearly Mario is both a model and a caution. Andrew is, for instance, particularly anxious not to seem indecisive or "coy" about his ambitions. "Whenever I'm given a chance, I like to come up with a definitive answer," he told me. "On the Senate, I said, 'Let me think about it for a short period of time and then [give] a definitive answer,' and I did that." Similarly, Cuomo's whole career in housing can be seen as a prophylactic response to the criticism so often directed against his father: that he talked a good game but had little concrete to show for it. Though Cuomo is respectful and affectionate in discussing his father, he is just as often wry.

If there is a politician Cuomo and his "minions" treat with complete reverence, it is Bobby Kennedy, the late father of his wife, Kerry. Cuomo's wedding, in 1990, was covered more as a political event than a social one—an alliance along the lines of a union between the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons. The couple now have three daughters—a one-year-old and four-year-old twins—and live in McLean, Virginia, not far from the Kennedy family estate, Hickory Hill.

When Cuomo joined the Cabinet, he was the youngest member since John Kennedy made Bobby Attorney General, in 1961, and in recent years a number of Bobby's causes have been added to the Housing Secretary's portfolio, including the plight of migrant workers and of Native Americans. Several of Cuomo's aides explicitly compared their boss's antipoverty campaign to Kennedy's, and this comparison made a big impression on me, since they must have been toddlers at the time Kennedy was assassinated.

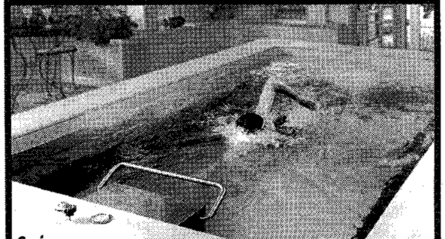
With his antipoverty campaign, Cuomo has sought—and received—a lot of press attention. Inevitably, given his invocation of racial and economic justice and his slide-show tour of shacks and slums, the press has focussed on the old-fashioned liberalism of his message. So controlling and so manifestly ambitious is Cuomo, it is practically taken for granted that this is the kind of coverage he wants, and that he is using it to try to build a base and position himself for some future race. Yet even in New York, and even within New York's Democratic Party, there is no evidence that moving to the left these days is a winning strategy, and no one is in a better position to appreciate this than Cuomo.

After a story appeared recently in the Washington *Post* about Cuomo's trip to Newburgh, a friend called him up and excoriated him. According to Cuomo, he said, "You're doing all this poverty stuff. There is no politics in that. It failed Mario and that's why Mario lost. That was your political weakness, that they were going to say you were just like Mario—liberal—and you've confirmed all the negatives." Cuomo recounted the conversation to impress upon me the purity of his motives and the genuineness of his empathy for those left behind. But to me it suggested something else.

I asked Mario Cuomo whether he, too, felt that, given the current climate, his son's ideological commitments represented bad politics. Cuomo, Sr., who is now a partner at the law firm of Willkie, Farr & Gallagher, claimed not to be in a position to comment. "I don't believe I have ever once discussed ideology with Andrew," he told me. I did not quite know what to make of this statement, which seemed to me incredible if true, and hardly less so if not. Cuomo added that in all the years his son had worked for him he had rarely asked, "How do you feel about that, Andrew?" Rather, he said, "Most of the time, he was serving my purposes."

The common assumption about politicians is that because they are insincere and calculating they are free to choose, depending on the results of their calculations, the particular forms of their insincerity. Yet even the most scheming remain, like the rest of us, prisoners of the self. In the course of his non-campaign for President, Mario Cuomo once left two chartered planes parked on a runway in Albany while the filing deadline for the New Hampshire primary passed. No one has ever been able to explain this in rational political terms—or, for that matter, in rational terms of any sort.

Watching Andrew, I sensed much the same drive, the same asceticism, and the same focussed intelligence that I remembered from covering his father. And again I could see how, in some contexts, those qualities could seem to represent integrity and commitment to principle and in others mere rigidity and self-involvement. Cuomo's intense personal ambition is undeniable, yet it may be misguided to suppose that his work at HELP and at HUD and his campaign on behalf of the nation's poor reflects, in a straightforward sort of way, the result of a pragmatic calculus. To ask what he hopes to get by identifying at this late date with his father's politics is to assume, quite possibly mistakenly, that he ever had a choice. ◆



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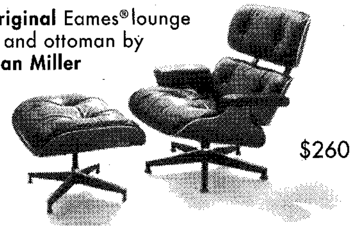

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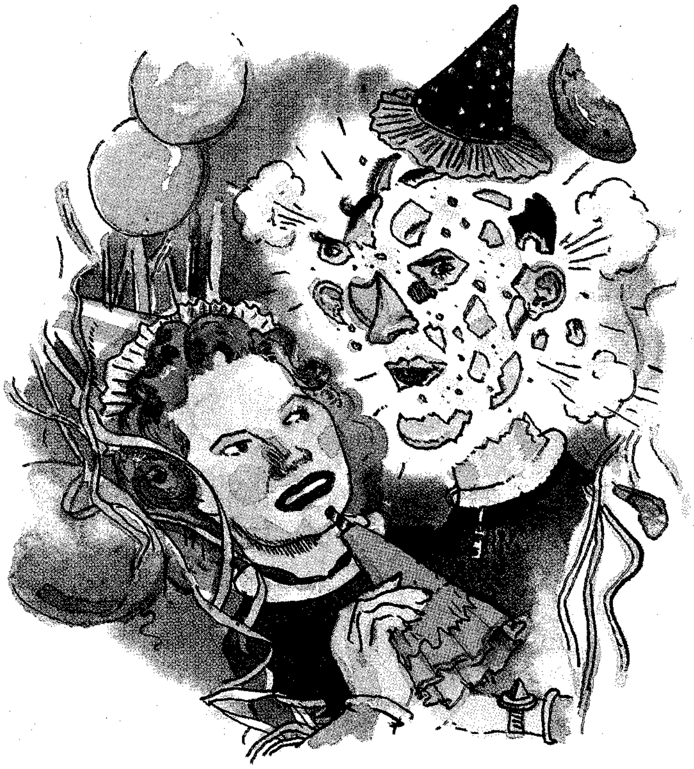
THE Y3K BUG

BY STEVE MARTIN



BARRY BLITT

WITH only eight years to go before the end of the third millennium, many scientists are beginning to express concern over the Tridecta Blighter Function, whose circuitry was not programmed to accommodate the year 3000. “Who knew that people would live six hundred years?” said Tyrell Oven-Baby No. 9, whose work in Danish metaoscillititaniannia led the way to the familiar Fundolator. “Yes, it’s true,” continued No. 9, “at the stroke of midnight on December 31, 2999, some individuals’ heads will explode. Naturally, the heads will grow back, but they will keep exploding, at random intervals, for the rest of their owners’ lives. This will be fine for the New Year’s Eve celebration, but I think most people would prefer it to stop by Dirndl Day.”

Of course, all of us have had our heads regenerated at one time or another, so why the fuss? The problem is that most of us who had a Tridecta Blighter Function implanted in our duodenum before the year 2465 will lose the use of two of our penises. This will leave most of us with our eight vaginas intact but with only six functioning male organs. Sure, it’s possible to get by with only six penises, but what about quality of life?

Some experts believe that the problem is overrated—that, at worst, a head may explode seven or eight times. And, since most people today keep their heads at home in an aluminum box, what difference will it make? But others consider this a freedom-of-choice issue, maintaining that we have the right to have our heads explode because we want them to, and not because some corporate giant failed to look six hundred years into the future. This is as fundamental a right, they claim, as the right to redirect the world’s rivers for personal gain, the right to re-hem anyone’s outer garments, and the right to govern one of the lesser races, such as the Offspring of Jerry Springer’s Guests.

Many people worry that the Y3K bug will interfere with the holidays. Perhaps the old Gregorian calendar might have been affected, but the Calendar of New Practicalities, which is centered on the three major televised holidays—the Super Bowl, the Oscars, and the N.B.A. playoffs—only requires a six-second delay at the start of the third quarter of the basketball semifinals every twenty-six years to keep it accurate. The holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Rosh Hashanah, combined into one three-day weekend to appease religious nuts, should not be affected.

What can I do?

Try to relax. When New Year’s Eve rolls around, put on an old movie, such as the hilarious comedy classic “2001.” Or treat yourself to a glass of water. This might also be a good time to plug up any oozing plasma you might have.

Stay home and let your head blow up. The worst thing that happens is that you’re out of commission until a new one grows. We all know what a peaceful time that can be, with no faxes ringing in our heads, and no B-mail messages being delivered to our right hemisphere from President Pete.

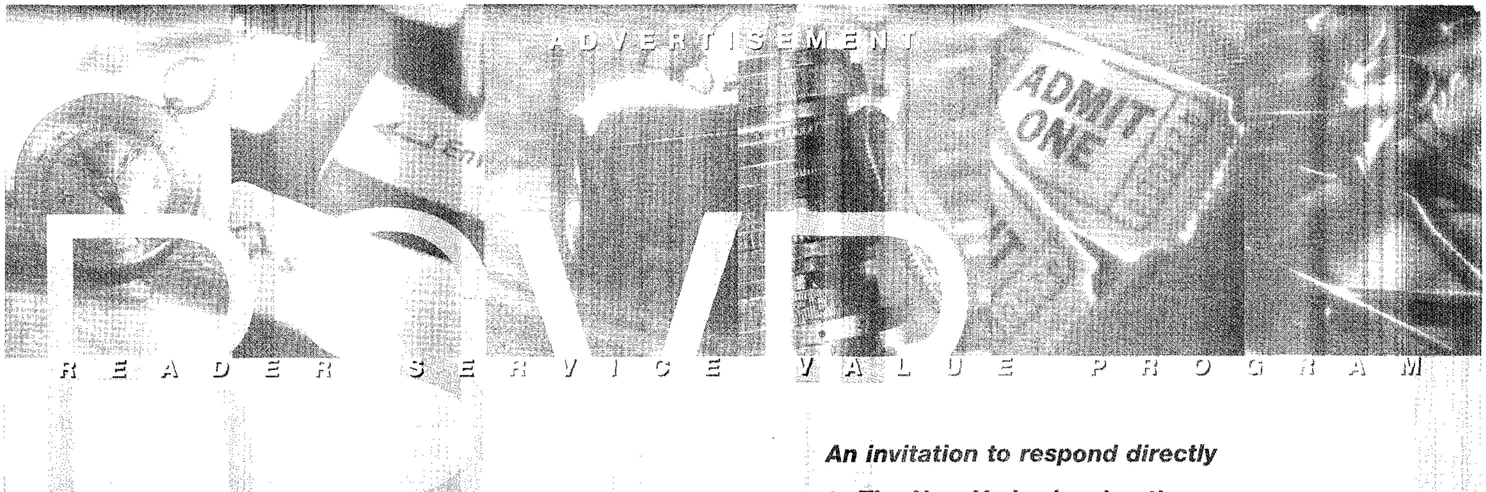
What happens if my head blows up while I’m at a party?

Everyone will know about the Y3K bug, and most likely you won’t be the only one to explode. You should be prepared, however, for those unkind revellers who will spoil your evening by taunting you with the nickname Ole Six Penis.

EVEN with all these helpful tips, there are bound to be those among you who are still uneasy about the coming millennium. If you can’t relax, try to meditate on these words:

“*Everything’s going to be* O.K. *Be sure to watch our two-hour special, brought to you by Andromeda, where we recap the music of the millennium.*”

I’m sure we can all take comfort in this message from our wisest of elders, Dick Clark. ♦



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9	A + ILED (*deli* rev.)
10	C(RUDE) OIL
12	SOL + TI (ref. Sir Georg Solti)
13	COMB + O
15	ADOR(N)ING
17	MINOR (*miner* hom.)
18	(f)EVER
19	AD(HERE)D

DOWN

1	S(PACE + CAD)ET
2	P + AIR
3	NEEDS (*kneads* hom.)
4	S(TROLL)ING
5	HABITS (hidden)
6	STALING + R + AD
7	F(LUMMOX)ED
11	GO + DIVA
14	O + N ICE
16	NOT + E

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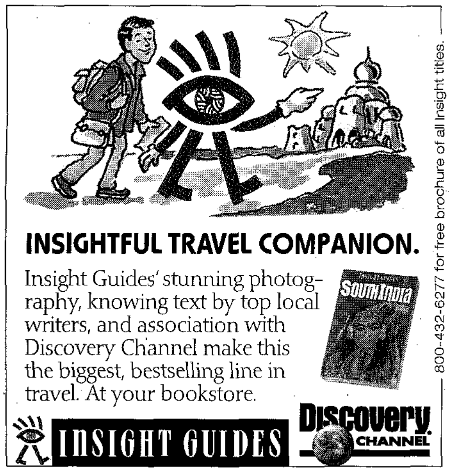

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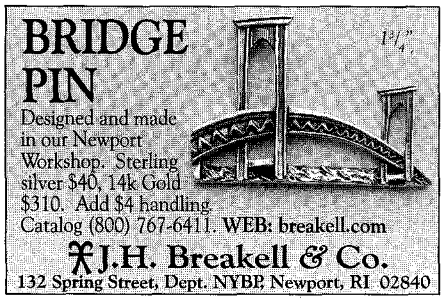

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ANNALS OF EDUCATION

THE MILLION-DOLLAR DIPLOMA

Harvard Business School struggles to maintain its value.

BY JAMES ATLAS

CHARLES ELIOT, who presided over Harvard as its president for an unprecedented forty years, from 1869 to 1909, was no defender of the ivory tower. He believed that the university's mission was to train "doers, achievers"—men equipped to go out into the world and change it for the better—and the medical and law schools flourished under his administration. There was, however, some resistance to the idea of a business school—a view expressed sharply by Thorstein Veblen in "The Higher Learning in America": "A higher average business efficiency simply raises activity and avidity in business to a higher average pitch and fervour, with very little other material result than a redistribution of ownership." Eliot nevertheless maintained that business administration could—and should—be taught. "Business in its upper walks has become a highly intellectual calling," he declared in 1908. In that year, the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, as the B-school is formally called, admitted its first class.

In the near-century since, Eliot's contention has been amply borne out. The "best" lists compiled by business magazines are invariably dominated by Harvard Business School graduates. Although *Business Week* dropped Harvard's ranking a notch last year in its biennial survey of the nation's best schools—from fourth to fifth—because of a sexual-harassment scandal that made headlines in Boston, *U.S. News & World Report*, another major ranking indicator, designated Harvard and Stanford No. 1 last year, ahead of Columbia, M.I.T., and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. (This year, however, Harvard was ranked second, behind Stanford.) A joke around the B-school campus goes: "If you're so smart, why didn't you go to the A-school?" But most of its students and its faculty believe that the B-school *is* the A-school. The pressing issue threatening the B-school's equanimity is not its ratings but its relevance. Harvard may have fully acknowledged the importance of the business world, but does the business world really need Harvard?

In the past few years, the instant Internet millionaires and new-media gurus whose entrepreneurial feats we read about every day in the business pages have shifted Wall Street's focus to Silicon Valley, and few of them went to the Harvard Business School. Why waste time? Going to business school in the late nineteen-nineties must seem like studying geology in 1849 when you could be knee-deep in the Sacramento River panning for gold. "You don't need a degree to practice business, unlike law or medicine, so we're competing with the fact that you don't need it," one professor at the Business School said to me.

As I wandered around the campus recently, the seismic transformations chronicled on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* every morning were nowhere in evidence. The professors' offices, unlike the musty warrens across the river in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, had a sleek, executive look, with comfortable sofas and potted plants and cherrywood coffee tables. The B-school has its own athletic facility, which is off limits to the rest of the university, with a health club, an indoor track, and three basketball courts. The financial motif is hard to miss. In Baker Library, the immense reading room—larger than Widener's—features a Dow Jones News Service display board behind the circulation desk, and two Bloomberg terminals have been installed against a wall. There is also an old trading booth from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. From the tall windows, one glimpses a country-club battalion of gardeners maintaining the grounds. "It's like the Palace of Brunei—they don't know how to spend it," a recent grad remarked. "You can only mow the lawn so many times a day."

Where does all this money come from? Harvard is almost obscenely rich—its thirteen-billion-dollar endowment is twice that of Yale, the next-richest private school in the nation—but

One professor describes the B-school's intense classroom discussions as being like "Oprah on speed." Photograph by Robert Polidori.

the B-school stands out from all but one of Harvard's other schools: its endowment is nine hundred and seventy-five million dollars. (Only the endowment of the Medical School is larger.) The lintels above the doors of the halls and dorms are adorned with the names of such business titans as Dillon and Kresge and Loeb, and new money is pouring in all the time. The rest of the B-school's wealth comes from the Executive Education programs, which offer executives the chance to recharge their batteries for four or five thousand dollars a week; from a tuition of twenty-five thousand dollars; and from the revenue generated by its vast publishing empire—an amalgam of books, the *Harvard Business Review*, and "cases," some six million of which are sold every year to companies and other business schools. "We have to create our own intellectual capital," John McArthur, a former dean of the Business School, told me. "If our field were classical literature or Greek history, it would have its own capital. We have to make it ourselves." The school's heavy investment in its intellectual infrastructure yields a significant return. Last year, more than eight thousand students applied for the nine hundred places in the class—applications have been rising in the last five years—and it's not hard to figure out why. Salaries for graduating Harvard M.B.A.s tend to start in six figures and go up from there.

THE heart of the B-school curriculum—"the bricks and mortar," as it's often called—is the case method. Originally borrowed from the Law School, where the study of legal cases had been instituted during the eighteen-seventies, the case method has long since been adopted as a standard teaching tool in business schools around the country. The cases have a uniform look, and tend to run to about twenty pages. They also tend to have a common formula, beginning like a feature story in a magazine:

> Dr. Hira Thapliyal rubbed his eyes and looked at the digital clock beside his bed. Was it 2 A.M. or 3 A.M.? Dr. Thapliyal was having a difficult time falling asleep; he couldn't help thinking about the board meeting that would take place later that week, where several important decisions affecting the future direction of his company—ArthroCare—would be made.

Or:

> Terry Opdendyk scooped a stack of files off his desk and loaded them into his briefcase. As he did so, he was careful to include materials he would need to think through several significant issues that faced ONSET Ventures, the venture capital firm of which he was a founding partner.

For B-school students, cases are the Holy Grail: in study alcoves on the first floor of Aldrich Hall, the students pore over charts and graphs, working their way toward a practical solution, honing their "prep" for the fierce classroom debates, which are an essential feature of the B-school hazing process. The Harvard Business School sees itself as a laboratory in which its students can examine the situations they will encounter in the real world.

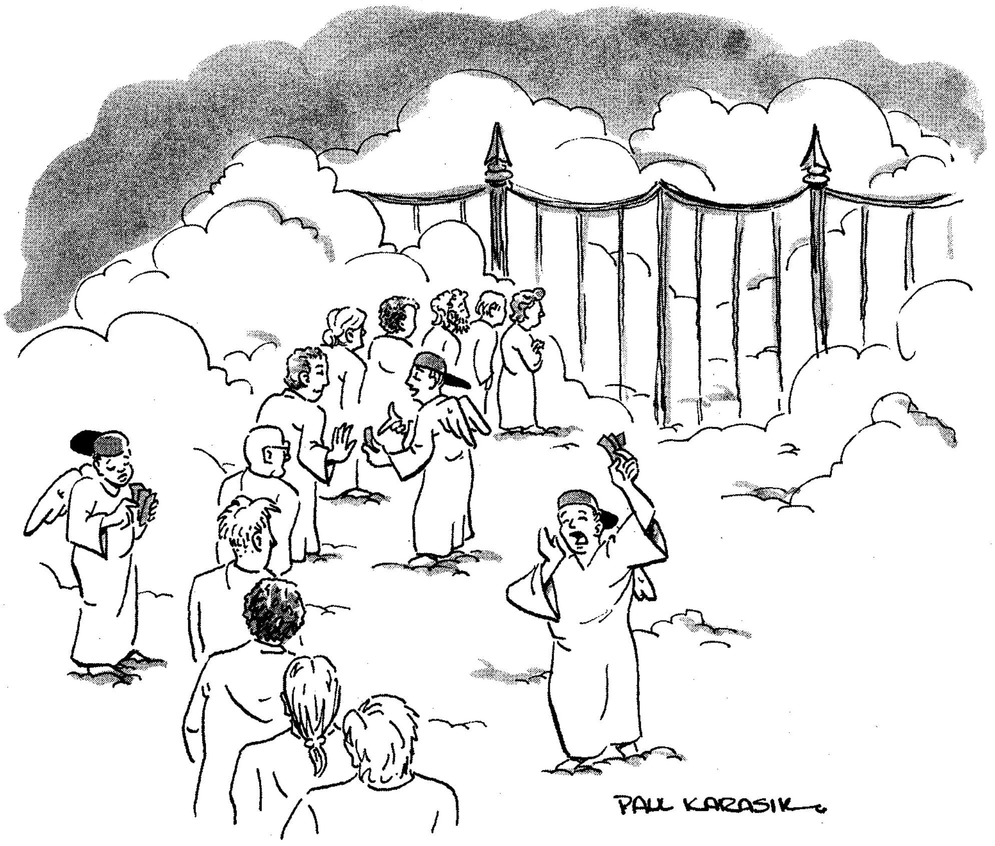
To this end, the B-school has aggressively recruited faculty adept at what it calls "practitioner-oriented research"—teachers who can "tell nonsense from things that will really work," as the Harvard management expert Rosabeth Moss Kanter put it. Just about all the professors I met were active consultants for enterprises like Frito-Lay, I.B.M., and Bristol-Myers Squibb, and some are themselves former C.E.O.s or other senior-level executives who have left the corporate sector. Between consulting, savvy investment, and substantial salaries, the B-school faculty has managed to thwart the state of mild deprivation that normally characterizes life in the academy, turning the vocation of teaching into what one alum described as "a money machine."

Despite these financial incentives, most of the faculty members I spoke with described their work in idealistic terms, and seemed to approach teaching with an almost evangelical zeal. They like to talk about "the genius of the place" and "the work of the school." They refer to their "stewardship." Nancy Koehn, a smartly dressed refugee from Harvard's History and Lit. program, typifies this attitude of pedagogic devotion. She speaks quickly, sawing the air with both hands as she builds precarious metaphors: "They come out of the oven like peanut-butter cookies with the fork marks on them but not pressed down; they haven't cooled," and "We lay out the tapas bar at which they'll munch." But her learning is formidable, and when she quotes Dorothea, in "Middlemarch," or refers to "the Greek sense of *paideia*," her allusions are firmly grounded. Students love her course, The Coming of Managerial Capitalism; last year, the school's Student Association cited her as one of two outstanding teachers in the elective curriculum. She describes the sorts of connections she attempts to elicit in the classroom: "What did the proliferation of clocks and pocket watches have to do with the leap to sustained growth in the mid-eighteenth century? What I try to get them to see are the inflection points in the history of capitalism, the moments when things radically change."

Debora Spar, who has taught Business, Government, and the International Economy (known around campus as BGIE, or Biggie), is equally fervent in her belief that, as she put it, "business is about more than numbers." Her current project is a book on how new technologies create a demand for new rules. There's always a period of anarchy at the start, she explained to me, comparing the rapid development of the Internet to piracy in the seventeenth century, when there was no regulation of commerce on the high seas. For Spar, Rupert Murdoch will turn out to be a defining figure in the regulation of new-media technology; she compares him with Cecil Rhodes and the De Beers cartel.

The Harvard Business School curriculum is highly demanding. Classes are an hour and twenty minutes long, and students have two or three a day. Initially, they adhere to a uniform core curriculum, taking electives only in the second year, and the core classes are highly structured. "We spend hours and hours—I can't count that high—discussing the courses we're going to teach," Roy Shapiro, the Jesse Philips Professor of Manufacturing, told me. The day I visited one of these planning sessions, for a required course called Technology and Operations Management, the case on the table concerned a languishing rust-belt factory owned by the Wriston Corporation, in Detroit—"one of my favorite cases of all time," Shapiro said excitedly to the other teachers, who were assembled around a seminar table in a windowless conference room. The question facing the company managers was whether to close it down. "How normative should we be in this session?" Shapiro speculated aloud. "Should we give our opinion? Do plants go through a life cycle, like humans?" After some back-and-forth about why the Detroit plant had decayed and how prohibitive the cost of keeping it going would be, he summed up the various responses that discussion leaders could expect, which were based on his experience in previous years: "M.B.A.s tend to be idealistic; they don't want to close the plant. They think they can fix it. C.E.O.s would want to close it down. The important thing is not just to give an answer but to make them feel and see the plant—that it's big and dirty and unsafe. Too many students are still analysts. They're going to look at the numbers instead of getting down on the floor and really valuing the plant."

The challenge was to get them to think like managers facing a



problem, not students facing a test. Shapiro's colleague David Upton, who also teaches Technology and Operations Management, explained, "It's not just what we teach; it's the choreography of it. The idea is to make management an active sport."

THE B-school classroom is designed to encourage participation. Arranged as an amphitheatre, it has five tiers, which have acquired the status of legend. The first tier is the Worm Deck, the second is the Garden Deck, the third is the Power Deck—so named because future captains of industry tend to gravitate there, "eye to eye with the professor," according to my guide, a genial ex-classicist from the communications office by the name of Jim Aisner—and the fourth and the fifth rows are the Warning Track and the Sky Deck. "It's teaching as theatre," Aisner explained. "I've had people from other universities come to measure these counters."

The structure of the seating fuels intense classroom discussion. Debora Spar describes the experience as "Oprah on speed." About half of the course grade is determined by the degree and the quality of class participation. "My first day, there were ninety hands in the air," Spar said. "I panicked." Students call it "fighting for airtime." The highest compliment a teacher can bestow is to say, "That was a good comment." (Grading is tough at the B-school: students are given a 1, a 2, or a 3, with 3 considered a "low pass"; and getting too many 3s, which is known as "hitting the screen," lands you before the academic-performance committee.) At the beginning of every class, a student is "cold-called" to introduce, or "open," the case. "If you blow your opener, you can blow your grade," a recent grad explained to me, "so there's a lot of incentive to do your homework."

The first class I visited, Entrepreneurial Finance, was an elective course taught by Paul Gompers. His specialty includes the structure and performance of private equity funds and the performance of I.P.O.s. On the day of my visit, the featured case concerned a recent startup called ems—efficient market services—and its efforts to secure a lease from a company by the name of Comdisco Ventures, a venture-finance firm that since its inception in 1987 has committed more than a billion three

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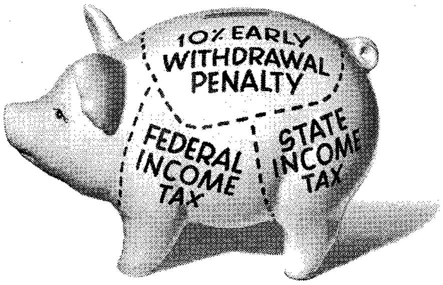

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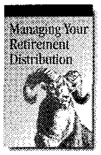

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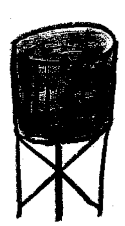
hundred million dollars to high-tech start-ups. Jim Labé, the president of Comdisco Ventures, who had actually done the deal, was going to be a guest in the classroom that day. To prepare, the students had formed groups of two to negotiate the lease the night before, and then entered their calculations online. As we walked down the hall toward the classroom, Gompers, a whippet-thin young man wearing a yarmulke and a bright flowered tie, told me that he had come in to his office at eight o'clock that morning and downloaded the results: "I was sweating it, but they mostly came out in the right ballpark."

Gompers called on a student to introduce the case and then walked the class through the negotiation, scribbling furiously on a huge blackboard—and, when that was full, two more blackboards, which materialized with the flip of a switch. I gathered that ems was a company that provided information-management services to stores and manufacturers, enabling them to coördinate supply and demand more efficiently. Comdisco had been approached to supply capital in the form of a venture-lease agreement, meaning that it would not only finance ems but also own the equipment required for the startup. "It's a good business," Gompers pointed out. "The cost of adding the next client is low. The fixed-asset requirements are largely the computer equipment, installing a computer in each store to register P.O.S."—point-of-sale—"data. But if you run back-of-the-envelope calculations you've got a potential thirty-one thousand grocery stores. Building up the infrastructure is going to involve huge costs up front."



With dizzying rapidity, Gompers elicited from the quiveringly alert students all the variables that would have to be factored in: the lease interest rate, the lease term, tax assumptions, warrants. At times, we all got left behind. "How do you price a venture lease?" Gompers asked, pacing back and forth. Silence. "Isn't that what you guys did last night?" he prompted them with genial sarcasm. "Did you just roll the dice?" As the class drew to a close, equations began to appear on the blackboard which I could only stare at blankly, but the students around me were intently following the micro-calculations involved in a "lease-value analysis," and two groups—"the outlyers," Gompers called them—had come up with numbers that represented the best possible deal from each side of the table. "Go see Jim after class and he'll offer you a job," Gompers told them, only half joking.

In the afternoon, I attended Leadership and Organizational Behavior, taught by Carl Sloane. He had joined the faculty after thirty years in the consulting business, and he proved to be an invigorating presence in the classroom. The case today was less a case than a management profile of Charlotte Beers, the legendary Texas-born former C.E.O. of the advertising behemoth Ogilvy & Mather. Beers had arrived at the company when its fortunes were in decline, and she and her team had managed to turn it around. For her, success in advertising was all about "building brands," and Sloane asked the class to explain why Campbell's soup was such a powerful brand. Dorothea Carraway raised her hand and delivered an impassioned soliloquy on the virtues of Campbell's soup: "I was thinking about my life in general and Campbell's soup came to mind. I know it sounds crazy, but I thought a lot about the sustainability of it as a brand. When I was a little kid, you know, you always think, Mmm, good."

"Why is the image there for you?" Sloane said, pressing her to explain. "I want to peel the onion a little bit."

She thought for a minute, then replied, "Nutrition was a big part of my family's life. And I had a mother who stayed home but was also a part-time college student, so there was the whole association with family and behavioral patterns."

"It's beyond the cognitive, beyond the analytical," Sloane said excitedly. "That's what Charlotte Beers is trying to get at—to tap into those associations. It's pure gold!"

For the next hour, the class discussed the challenges that Beers faced as a strong manager in a struggling company. Then, toward the end of the session, Sloane showed a ten-minute video of Beers addressing her employees: she spoke about the agency's "mission" with impressive fluency, conveying her passion for the primacy of the brand with a cautionary tale about the disastrous "New Coke" marketing decision some years back. She asked why customers had so vehemently rejected the new product, and answered, "Because the brand is owned by the people who consume it." She went on to say, "I had my first kiss while I had a bottle of Coke in my hand. . . . Coca-Cola isn't about taste; it's about my life."

SEVERAL years ago, the B-school installed an eleven-million-dollar, state-of-the-art Intranet network on campus, which wired up not only the entire school but also more than half of its sixty-six thousand alums, who can now log on from anywhere in the world. One could argue that this resource alone would go a long way toward justifying the cost of tuition at the B-school, and that argument gained credibility when I spoke with Myra Hart, who teaches two second-year elective courses, called Starting New Ventures and Women Building Business. "It's all about who knows whom," she said. "Who will open the door for me? Who will listen to me?" Hart has collected data from five-year classes dating back to the nineteen-sixties, and her research demonstrates that successful venture founders have two characteristics: they know their venture's territory—how the field works, who their competitors are, where to find the talent—and they themselves are known to suppliers, to customers, to potential employees. In other words, they have a track record. "Our goal is to take the focus off the individual and create networks, so that people can accomplish what they couldn't accomplish without them," Howard Stevenson, a professor at the Business School, said to me. He even had a term for this process: "embeddedness."

Monique Maddy is a case in point. A Harvard M.B.A. '93, Maddy is a Liberian by birth who was educated in English boarding schools and graduated from Georgetown and Johns Hopkins before she enrolled in the B-school. She was not an academic star there, but she had a powerful idea: to supply wireless telephone service in Africa and other emerging-market areas with radio-based phones, which would circumvent the threat of stolen copper wire and vandalized telephone booths. Maddy's simple but ingenious concept was to supply customers with beepers and phone cards that could be inserted into the nearest wireless pay phone to obtain their messages when they got beeped.

THE BROTHER

Dropping a canapé in my Beaujolais
At some reception, opening, or launch,
I recall briefly the brother I never had
Presiding at less worldly rituals:
The only man at my wedding not wearing a tie;
Avuncular, swaddling my nephew over the font;
Thumbing cool oil on our mother's forehead
In the darkened room, the bells and frankincense...
While the prodigal sweats in the strip-lit corridor.

Now picture us facing each other, myself and the brother
I never met: two profiles in silhouette,
Or else a chalice, depending how you look.
Imagine that's this polystyrene cup.
I must break bread with my own flesh and blood.

—Michael Donaghy

It was an ambitious scheme, but within a year of making her pitch Maddy had assembled a million and a half dollars in venture capital. Within five years, she had raised twenty-five million. Motorola, Sprint, Lockheed, and General Electric put up seed money. "None of this is about writing business plans," Howard Stevenson, one of her mentors, said. "I think you bet on people. The standard of due diligence is often 'How much money are you putting in, Howard? I'll put in the same,' " Stevenson told me. Two years ago, Hillary Clinton unveiled the first wireless phone kiosk in East Africa.

John McArthur, the former dean and another of Maddy's mentors, proudly showed me an actual phone kit for Adesephone, as Maddy's project was called. ("*Adese*" means "regal" in Maddy's native language.) It consisted of an imitation-leather case containing a clip-on plastic beeper—"made in Taiwan for a dollar seventy-two a unit"—with a rubber-coil cord; a pocket-size booklet for phone numbers; and a compartment for business cards. "If she pulls it off, she'll change the way people live," McArthur said. When I mentioned Maddy's project to a second-year student, he knew all about it. "They teach you to be a great salesman here," he said.

One afternoon, I ducked into the cafeteria in Kresge Hall, hoping to interview some students, and two guys invited me to sit down—Sunil, who arrived at the B-school by way of Mangalore University, in India, and Georgia Tech, and Lex, who had worked for *Smart Money* before coming to the B-school. A bristlingly outspoken young man in a faded-blue T-shirt, Lex had nothing good to say about the place, and didn't care if I quoted him by name. "The school is way too homogeneous in its underlying philosophies," he said heatedly. "The mentality of success and money is too conventional. With America so successful, it's easy to think that the capitalist way is the only way to improve the world. We know what levers to pull, but are they morally or ethically the right ones?"

"People do talk about ethics here," Sunil demurred.

"It's not just ethics," Lex persisted. "There's a herd mentality here—a corporate mentality."

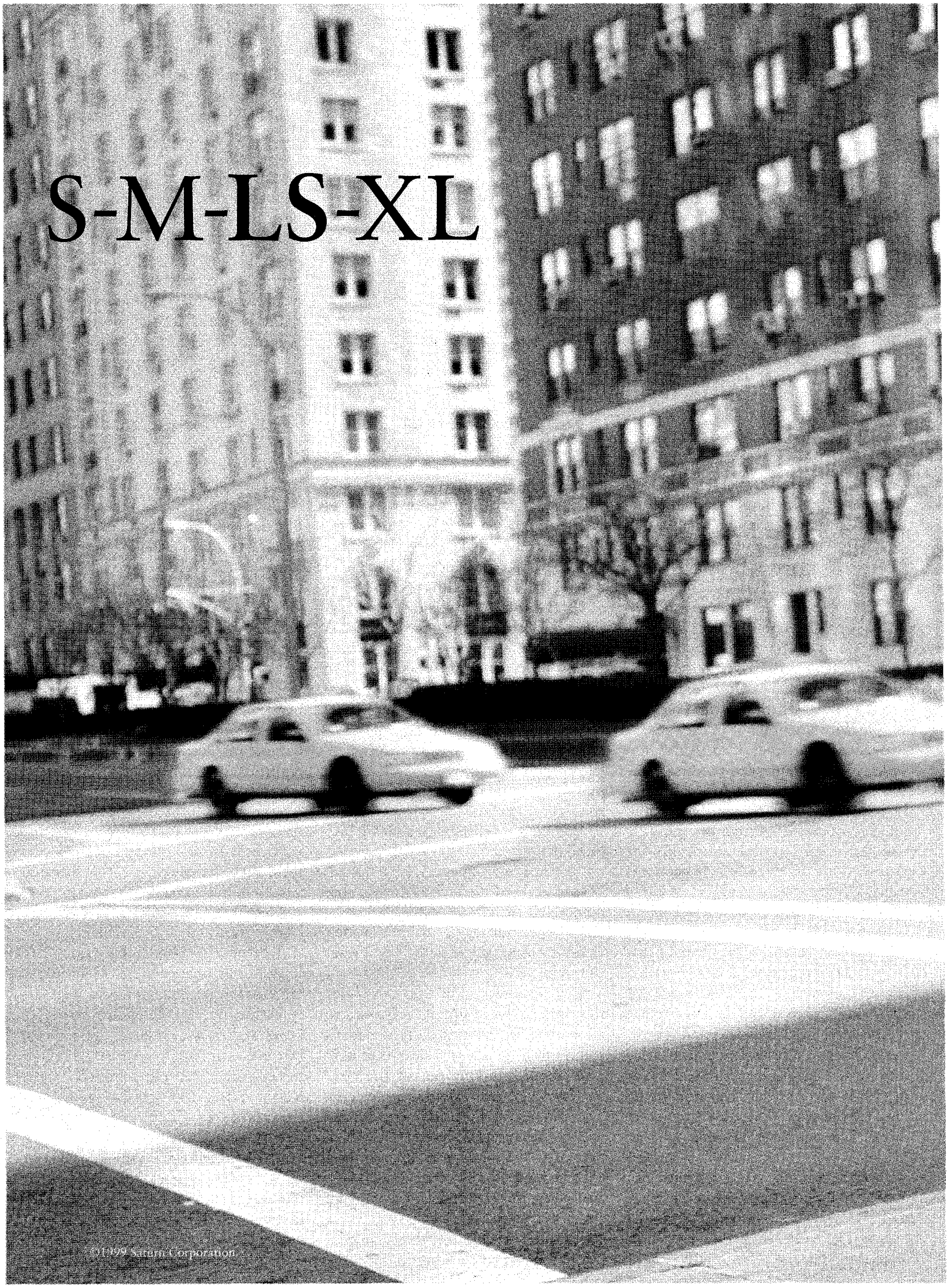
"They're not trying to impose their values on you," Sunil said. "They want you to carve your own niche."

Lex disagreed. He told me about the time he wore funny sunglasses to a lecture and his classmates "made a commotion" about it. "Everyone here talks about 'thinking out of the box,' but they don't really do it. People come here to network. There are consequences if you don't go to certain parties, or if you violate group norms. I believe they believe in their statements, but they're not creating leaders who are going to change the world."

Still, the school itself has changed. It's no longer merely a bastion of well-to-do Republican white males; there are Hispanics, Eastern Europeans, blacks, and Asians—not to mention a ratio of women that has risen from less than ten per cent in 1963 to more than thirty per cent this year—and at least two-thirds of the class gets some kind of financial aid. So diverse is the student body that a computer program has been installed that enables faculty and staff to pull up a data bank of the students' photographs, accompanied by a unique feature: they can click on a recording of the students saying their names (Aslaug Magnusdottir, Neeraj Agrawal, Evelthon Vassiliou), to be sure they're pronouncing them properly in class.

The trend toward social enterprise is no less marked than the trend toward entrepreneurship. Thirty years ago, popular books at the B-school included Peter Drucker's "The Practice of Management" and Thomas Watson, Jr.,'s "A Company and Its Beliefs." Now they are Kanter's "The Change Masters" and "World Class," and John P. Kotter's "The New Rules." Kanter's books chronicle the dynamics of globalization, ascribing special powers to those independent spirits who recognize the virtues of interconnectedness. "Business wasn't interesting in the seventies," Kanter told me. "It became intellectually interesting in the eighties and nineties. Entrepreneurs weren't considered a critical part of the economy. With the creation of new financial instruments, you could be inventive. It turned out you could transform these bureaucracies; they became a tremendous arena for change. I'm fascinated by the new roles: Chief Knowledge Officer; Change Agent."

Kotter, the Konosuke Matsuhita Professor of Leadership, is an authority on managerial behavior, and, like his colleague, he sees the end of corporate hegemony as a wonderful opportunity for those who are enterprising enough to seize it. His book, subtitled "Eight Business Breakthroughs to Career Success in the 21st Century," is based on a twenty-year study of a representative sample of the Business School's Class of 1974, most of whose members started out in traditional corporations—"tall hierarchies"—and ended up launching businesses of their own or in related entrepreneurial activities. His New



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Rules are an attempt to categorize this change, a kind of Tao of corporate flexibility: "Beware of the conventional and traditional. In a time of rapid change, the unconventional often wins," and "A turbulent environment offers many opportunities for growth for those willing to take some risks and to reflect honestly on their experiences."

The new rules have become the rule. "Three-fourths of the students want to run their own show, develop a private equity fund," Jill Fadule, the former director of admissions and financial aid, told me. "It's a really marked shift." A common theme among the faculty members I spoke with was a general disenchantment with big corporations—a development ascribed to downsizing and layoffs at the executive level. "It used to be popular to get a job with a large corporation and end up in the executive suite—get with a company, get your watch fifty years later," one professor explained. "That's gone. People listen to their internal voices these days—dual careers, what's suitable for the family, control over one's destiny." But even as the B-school extols the virtues of the nimble start-ups outmaneuvering the lumbering giants, it has to be wary of its own prospects: just how nimble is a prosperous and venerated ninety-one-year-old educational institution likely to be?

B-SCHOOL administrators have been doing their best to keep up: during the past few years, there has been such an explosion of entrepreneurial enterprise on the West Coast that the school has opened up an office—the California Research Center—in the heart of Silicon Valley. It is overseen by Michael Roberts, the director of the B-school's Entrepreneurial Studies program. Roberts explained to me that the C.R.C. employs two people "to proactively crank up the volume on the number of cases we're writing in that area." He continued, "California is almost like an ecological lens, like the Galápagos: infinite variety and specialization."

One of the B-school's most popular innovations has been West Trek—a gathering in Silicon Valley that gives students the opportunity to visit startup companies and hang out at cappuccino joints in Palo Alto during the winter break. "There's a deep excitement, a true sense of entrepreneurship out there," Anthony Soohoo, who graduated from the school last month, and who was one of the organizers of this year's expedition, told me. "An M.B.A. joining one of these companies has a chance to help shape its culture." Last year, two hundred and twenty-five students made the trip; this year, the number came to three hundred and fifty.

When I arrived in Menlo Park, the West Trekkers had already headed back to Boston, leaving behind a trail of business cards. The grandly titled California Research Center is situated just off Highway 280, in an office complex at 3000 Sand Hill Road—"the richest street in the world," a financial journalist I know calls it. Outwardly, it looked merely affluent, but the architectural modesty of Sand Hill Road belies its considerable clout: there's a long waiting list for space here. Nicole Tempest, half of the center's two-person staff, told me that a few weeks earlier tenants had been puzzled to hear voices coming from a janitor's closet. Seemingly overnight, it had been converted into a venture-capital office. As Tempest explained it, 3000 Sand Hill Road is a "brand."

For the next three days, I drove up and down Highway 101, the spine of Silicon Valley, and dropped in on alumni who had staked their claim in various high-tech ventures. Many of the offices I visited were so new that electricians and carpenters were still wandering around the lobbies. "It smells like a new car, doesn't it?" a receptionist commented as she led me to the office of Buck French, a trim, friendly young man with a sun-reddened face who had graduated from the B-school in 1996. "I was an unlikely candidate for this," he told me. French had taught counterinsurgency tactics to Central American troops before enrolling in the B-school. "Five years ago, I was slogging through swamps. Now I'm running a company."

The purpose of his company, On-Link Technologies, in Redwood City, he explained, was to provide "Web-native E-commerce applications" designed to enhance selling power and cut sales costs for businesses with Internet links. French sat me down in front of a whiteboard—the only thing on the wall in most of the offices I visited—and drew a diagram of his insight, saying, "You can't look at the world vertically; you have to look at it horizontally." He sketched out a grid of "how the world normally works":

SALES FORCE
GENERATES ORDERS
ORDER FULFILLMENT
BACK OFFICE

"With the Internet, it works this way," he said. "If I can push selling knowledge out to point-of-sale—i.e., the Web—then you become the sales force. If I can get that knowledge out to the point-of-sale, I automate the customer. Think of gas stations: you used to have a gas jockey pump your gas for you; then you pumped it yourself and went up to the window to pay; now you slide your credit card through the slot. Our job is to source you as a vender."

Later that afternoon, I drove over to Palo Alto and dropped in on David Perry, M.B.A. '97. Perry had come up with a way to improve the distribution of biological chemicals and reagents to laboratories by means of the Web, and had entered his idea in the newly inaugurated Harvard Business Plan Contest in 1997, becoming a finalist. "The summer I graduated, I sat in an un-air-conditioned apartment in Soldiers Field, while my classmates were biking through Europe or hiking in the Andes, and made cold calls," he said. "There were some dark hours—afternoons when I didn't have any money and wondered if it was possible. A lot of people thought I was nuts." Now, only two years later, he is sitting in a corner office overseeing a workforce of a hundred and fifty employees.

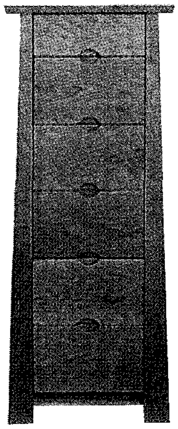
The next day, I had lunch with Gregory Slayton, the C.E.O. of MySoftware, at Il Fornaio, in Palo Alto. MySoftware, founded in 1986, is considered an "old" company. It is an emerging leader in the Internet direct-marketing-services field, and Slayton is credited with having turned it around. After nearly going under, MySoftware saw its stock price rise by four hundred and sixty-nine per cent last year. Slayton, who got his Harvard M.B.A. in 1990, is also considered old: at forty, he's one of the senior tech moguls in the Valley. Before attending the B-school, he ran an orphanage in Manila and managed a multinational relief effort in West Africa. Slayton is a great believer in what he likes to call "mind-share"—the importance, in the new economy, of management's being able to earn and hold employees' commitment. "The command-and-control style of management is completely outmoded," he said. "You have to get your people excited about their role in the big picture—to give it something of a noble purpose and show that it's for the betterment of society."

I asked Slayton what he'd got out of the B-school. "I got a massive amount of contacts," he answered. "It's all about whom you know, whom you trust, who returns your phone calls—or, now, E-mail." This was the same answer I had got from just about everyone. (As Nicole Tempest said of one of her colleagues, "She's very networked.") But David Perry had also matter-of-factly acknowledged that he'd been clueless about the rigors of entrepreneurship before attending Harvard. "Not only did I not know about business," he said, "but I didn't know what I didn't know."

As I got into my little red Avis convertible and headed back to San Francisco, I thought of the term that Howard Stevenson had used to describe the B-school's efforts to create networks capable of sustaining entrepreneurs as they built their companies: embeddedness. The California Research Center seemed a good example of this process: it had a direct connection to the B-school, with its vast resources; it generated cases from the graduates' experience in startups; it provided a conduit for newly minted M.B.A.s; and it focussed on emerging trends in Silicon Valley. The B-school didn't just provide credentials and connections; it demonstrated that those things still matter.

A FEW weeks later, I was back at the B-school to attend a class when I spotted Lex—the hotheaded student I'd talked to in Kresge Hall a few months earlier—waving to me from the Worm Deck. "Hey, you're the guy from *The New Yorker*," he said. "We have to talk, man. I've changed my mind about a lot of things." As it turned out, Lex had been converted by the electives in the second-year curriculum. The first year, he explained to me a few days later, had been far too regimented: "It was like boot camp. The second year, they let you blossom in your own way." Among his favorite classes were James Austin's Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector, and a "far-out" class called Customer Behavior Lab, taught by Jerry Zaltman, about getting to know the customer better through "metaphor and neuroimaging."

I asked Lex how he felt about the B-school now that he was graduating. "It was an amazing transformational experience—I have to give them credit," he said, sounding like a section man from Leadership and Organizational Behavior. "It's given me a chance to trial-and-error my entire life." ♦



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PROFILE

THE SULTAN OF STUFF

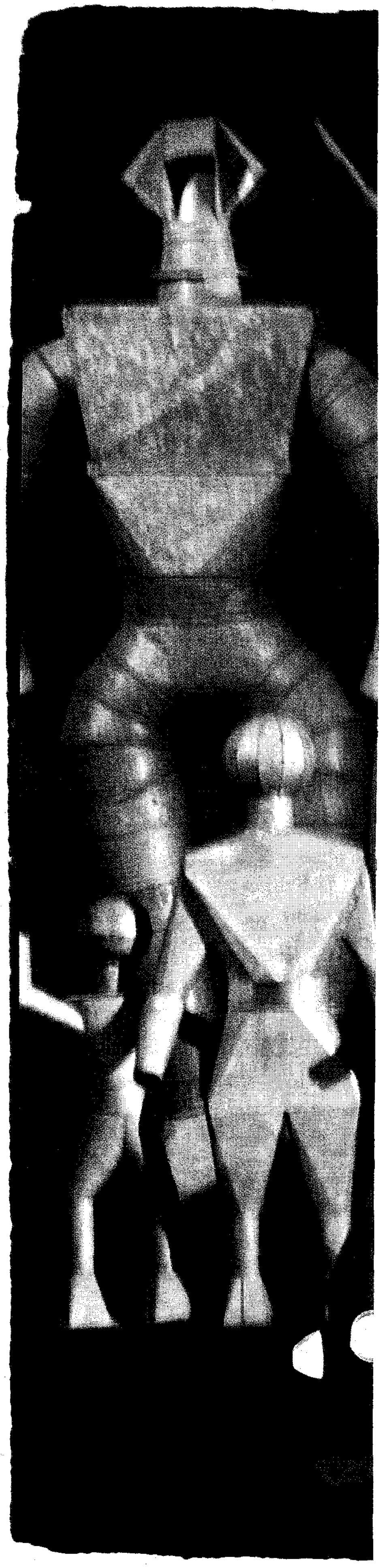
Is Alex Shear's odd collection just junk or the key to American culture?

BY DAVID OWEN

"IF someone asks me 'What do you collect?' it's not easy for me to respond," Alex Shear told me in 1992. Holy cow, was he ever right. Shear has been scouring flea markets, garage sales, and antique shows all over the country for roughly thirty-five years, and his collection is impossible to characterize succinctly except in terms of its size: it is very, very large. He once prepared a written outline of the things he then owned; it contained more than twelve hundred categories, including "station-wagon memorabilia," "folk-art roller-skate carrying cases," "generator flashlights," and "occupational hats." What else? Well, he has cans of Lock Thaw, Loosen-All, Oilit, Lock-Ease, Oily Bird, Nuts Off, and other "thawing lubricants," and he has cans of regular motor oil and floor wax, and he has oversized jars of mustard. He has packages of Flamingo-brand bobby pins, which at one time were the official hairpins of American Airlines stewardesses. He has a Christmas wreath made of beer-can pull tabs, and a guitar made from a ham can, and an anonymous soldier's carving of General Douglas MacArthur, and a number of humorous novelties inspired by the 1979 nuclear-reactor accident at Three Mile Island (among them a kitchen clock, three large ashtrays shaped like foaming cooling towers, and someone's self-produced board game called React-Or: A Radiating Experience). He has numerous wooden templates for cast-iron manhole covers, one of which prompted him to tell me, "You know, if I ever go into a retirement home and meet the former president of Quirin Machine Works & Leed Foundry, of St. Claire, Pennsylvania, makers of manhole and inlet castings, I will be able to intelligently discuss with this man his decision to stop making sewer plates from cast iron and start making them from a lightweight alloy."

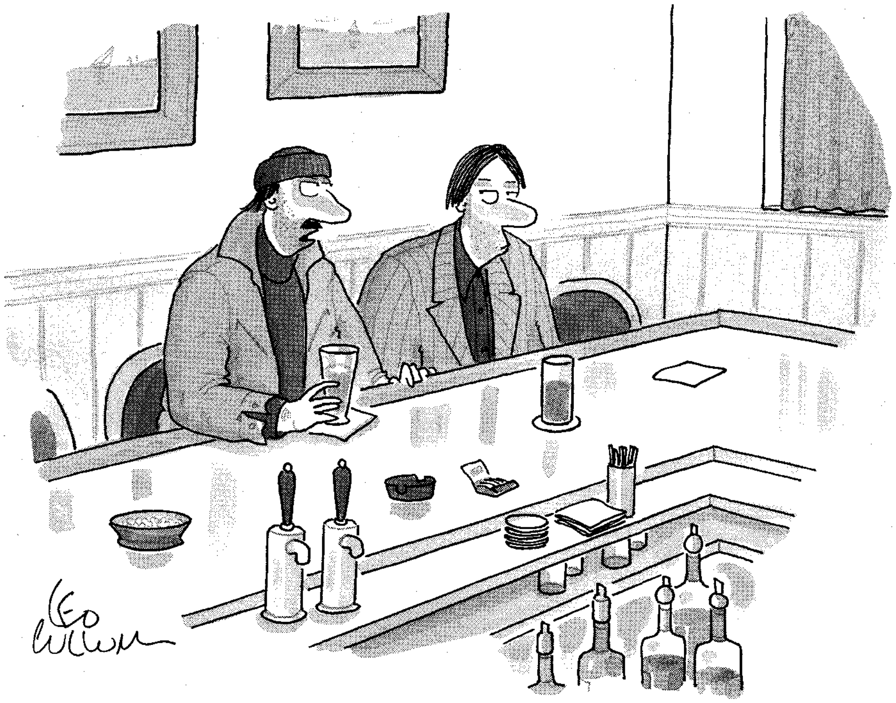
Storing his purchases—which now include some sixty thousand items—has always been a problem for Shear. The first time I visited his six-room apartment, on the Upper West Side, I had to make my way through a labyrinth of floor-to-ceiling piles of acquisitions, which had displaced virtually the entire habitable volume of his residence—and the apartment was just one of seven storage sites he was using at that time. Shear has two teen-age sons, and they sometimes have to rearrange the piles in their rooms in order to go to bed. (Both boys have become avid collectors, too.) Shear now stores the bulk of his stuff in a warehouse in Westchester, but space remains tight; there are large portions of his collection which he hasn't seen in years.

I first encountered Shear and parts of his collection seven years ago, when I attended a show at the Children's Museum of Manhattan and wrote a short article about it for this magazine's Talk of the Town section. The show, which was called "Great Stuff!," consisted of three dozen collections that had been assembled by ordinary people (about a fifth of whom were children) and displayed the way items in museums are usually displayed: behind glass, with careful lighting and printed labels. Almost all the exhibits were about what you would expect. For example, there were collections of bottle caps, stamps, Pez dispensers, baseball cards, business cards, socks, and ceramic frogs. But two of the collections were strikingly different, and both belonged to Shear. The first was called Pop Brand Radios. It consisted of several hundred transistor radios designed to look like other consumer products (among them a bar of



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CALLIS

Shear and several of his thirty-five Tin Men: when the architect Robert Venturi first met the collector, he said, "Where have you been all my life?"



"I tried victimless crime, but I'm a people person."

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deodorant soap, a package of Velveeta, a miniature television set, and a can of Mr. Pibb). The second, called Tin Can Art, consisted of anthropomorphic sculptures and other items that anonymous craftspeople had fashioned from scraps of metal, lengths of electrical conduit, sections of galvanized ductwork, and similar bits and pieces of industrial detritus.

Pop Brand Radios and Tin Can Art were significantly more engaging than the other collections in the show—partly, I think, because each of the groupings somehow enhanced rather than diminished the impact of the individual pieces. In an ordinary collection—say, a collection of Cabbage Patch dolls—any single object tends to be overwhelmed by the group, like a face in a crowd. You don't think, Wow, those are cool Cabbage Patch dolls! Instead, you think, Wow, that sure is a lot of Cabbage Patch dolls! In both of Shear's exhibits, though, the amassing of many related items had somehow had the opposite effect: accumulation had made individual pieces seem more vivid rather than less, even though both collections were quite large. A single pop-brand radio is a cultural oddity; surrounded by hundreds of others, though, it begins to seem like a breakthrough in anthropology. In addition, both of Shear's collections—like all good collections—seemed as though they might be windows into the mind of their collector.

While I was admiring one of the pieces in Tin Can Art—a weathervane in the shape of an American flag which had been constructed from painted bottle caps and Budweiser cans—I fell into a conversation with a fidgety, talkative middle-aged man who was standing nearby and was holding two bulging shopping bags. I don't recall saying more to him than "Hello" or "Excuse me," but suddenly he was giving me a tour of the exhibit. Pointing to sculptures behind the glass, he said, "That one is battery-terminal man, and these are electric-box men, and this is piston-head man, who probably has the best attitude of them all. They were made by blue-collar guys on their lunch breaks. This one probably commemorates the first man on the moon. That's a light-socket man. This is Nat, from the National Screw Company, and he's made from nuts, bolts, and screws, and this is his Mexican counterpart, Lac. This is a family of light-bulb-head people, with dog."

The talkative man turned out to be Shear himself; his shopping bags contained additional pieces, which he had just acquired and wanted to add to the exhibit. Our conversation continued for the rest of the afternoon and over dinner that evening, and, in a sense, it has been going on ever since. Shear has called my house so often that my wife and my children (and, for all I know, my dogs) now instantly recognize his voice. Shear suffers from whatever is the opposite of chronic fatigue syndrome, and when he talks about his collection he uses conjunctions in places where unafflicted people would use full stops, and thereby makes himself almost impossible to interrupt. Not long ago, he said to me, in part, "And then I realized that the thing I love is *stuff*, and that it speaks to me, and it's the soul of America—these things that came out of the home of the average Joe and Jane—and there is something quintessentially American about them, and they somehow have to be saved, because I have never seen anything like them in the Smithsonian or anywhere else, and when I look at these things they begin to make sense to me as the embodiment of American can-do, American innovativeness, Yankee ingenuity, build-a-better-mousetrap—a latter-day extension of the pioneer spirit, the cowboy spirit, the reckless exciting desire to go over the next mountain—and there are times when I see something that speaks to me so deeply, and I have a feeling of seeing something that is so sensational, that at times I have to control myself." (Once while he was talking to me on the telephone, I put down the receiver, left the room, did some photocopying, fed the cats, picked up the extension in the kitchen and said "Uh-huh," went back to my office, turned on the speakerphone, straightened up my desk, sharpened some pencils, picked up the receiver, and said, "Alex—Alex, listen a second, I've got to go now—I've got to get to the hardware store before it closes.")

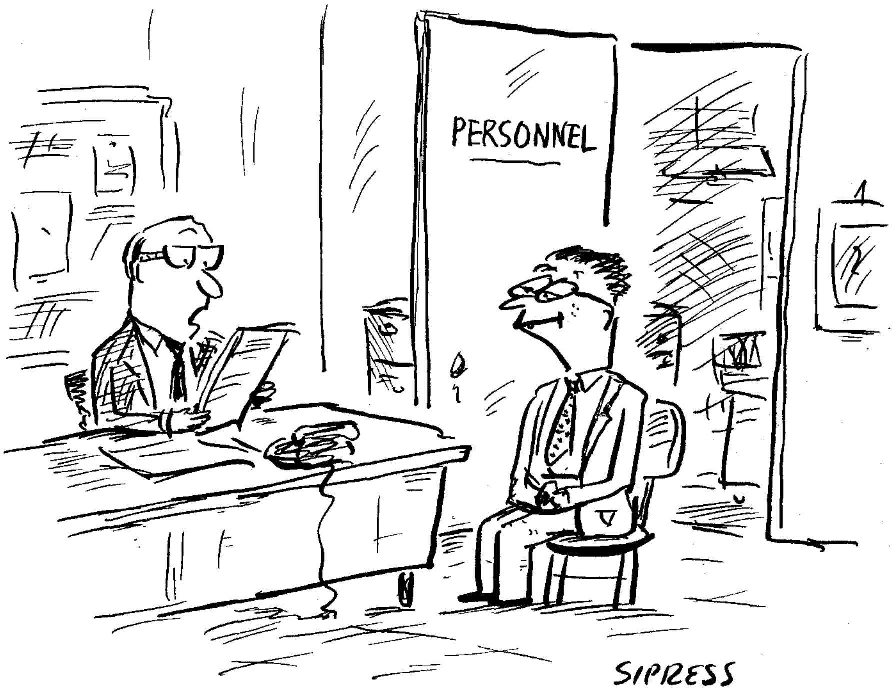
AT the time I met Shear, he was not employed in any conventional sense; for the most part, his occupation was buying stuff. He had made a great deal of money in the past, he told me, and for a number of years he had been involved mainly in spending that money at flea markets. As for why he was doing so, he wasn't quite clear. At various times during our first meeting, he suggested to me that filling his apartment with flea-market purchases had been his way of dealing with a personal sense of emptiness and loss that had followed his divorce, two years before. (He owns an extensive collection of plastic brides and grooms, which he began buying during the years when his marriage was coming apart.) But he also said that he had been collecting similar items for many years, and he also said that buying eccentric things was something he had started doing as a way of strengthening his relationship with his two young sons, and he also said that he had always viewed his buying as a form of investing, which would pay off big in the future. And he said a few other things as well. I eventually got the feeling that his diverse explanations for his avocation weren't contradictions but were provisional attempts to give a recognizable shape to a yearning that wasn't fully comprehensible even to him.

Other collectors and dealers have often had an even harder time making sense of Shear and his stuff. William Morford, who owns an auction company and has had dealings with Shear for many years, says, "Alex has a vision and a mission that only he truly sees and understands. He reaches for items and into collecting areas that others totally overlook and ignore, and he buys things that actually irritate many of the stuffy, 'correct' types in our business. But Alex's things are a snapshot of our culture, and I think that someday the collecting world will come to appreciate them in the way it now appreciates Shaker furniture, American folk art, and other areas that used to be dismissed or ignored."

Shear's vindication may have already begun. Today, one of his most impressive collections consists not of flying-saucer-shaped kitchen appliances or soup-related advertising props but of human beings: he has attracted a substantial following of people who have been so impressed by him and his obsession with American popular culture that they have attempted to attach their lives and their businesses to his in various complicated ways. Among the current members of his coterie: two architects in Greenwich, Connecticut, who hope to display Shear's collection and, ultimately, house much of it in a for-profit museum; marketing executives of several large corporations, among them General Motors, Maytag, Procter & Gamble, the Walt Disney Company, and Universal Studios; an India-born advertising expert named Ravi Arapurakal, who views Shear's collection as an important milestone in the chronicling of "the history of human freedom"; a major publishing company, which plans to bring out a coffee-table book, tentatively entitled "The Everyday Art of America," that is based on Shear's collection; a woman in Philadelphia who believes that Shear could be the ideal candidate for a new chair in American studies at the University of Pennsylvania; and the architect Robert Venturi, who after spending an hour among the piles in what had once been Shear's living room turned to his host and said, "Alex, where have you been all my life?"

THE exhibit at the Children's Museum back in 1992 was the first public showing of any part of Shear's collection. (The organizer of the exhibit had discovered Shear after hearing of an informal presentation about collecting that Shear had made at the school attended by one of his sons.) Shear liked the reaction, which was enthusiastic, and he began to seek similar opportunities. In 1993, he supplied roughly half the items for a show at the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design which was called Mechanical Brides and featured housework-related gadgets and appliances from the twenties, thirties, forties, and fifties, and the following year he contributed several items to another Cooper-Hewitt show, on packaging. Over the next few years, he appeared on various television shows, including "CBS This Morning" and "Good Morning America." He formed consulting companies called Shear America and Nostalgia Brokers, both of which, besides doing other things, began renting out items from his collection, mostly to advertising agencies and consumer-products companies. (In 1994, for example, he created an exhibit of galvanized-sheet-steel sculptures for a meeting, in Washington, of the American Zinc Association.) And he made presentations to groups of students at just about every educational level, from first grade through graduate school.

Last fall, I drove to New York early one morning to be a part of the audience for one such presentation, which Shear was making to upper-school students at the Calhoun School, on West End Avenue. He had spoken to a class at the school not long before, and they had liked him so much that they had asked him to come back and address an assembly. On this occasion, he brought several dozen items that he thought would appeal to teen-agers, and he arranged them on a table under a basketball hoop at one end of the school's gymnasium. He was wearing jeans and a plaid work shirt, and



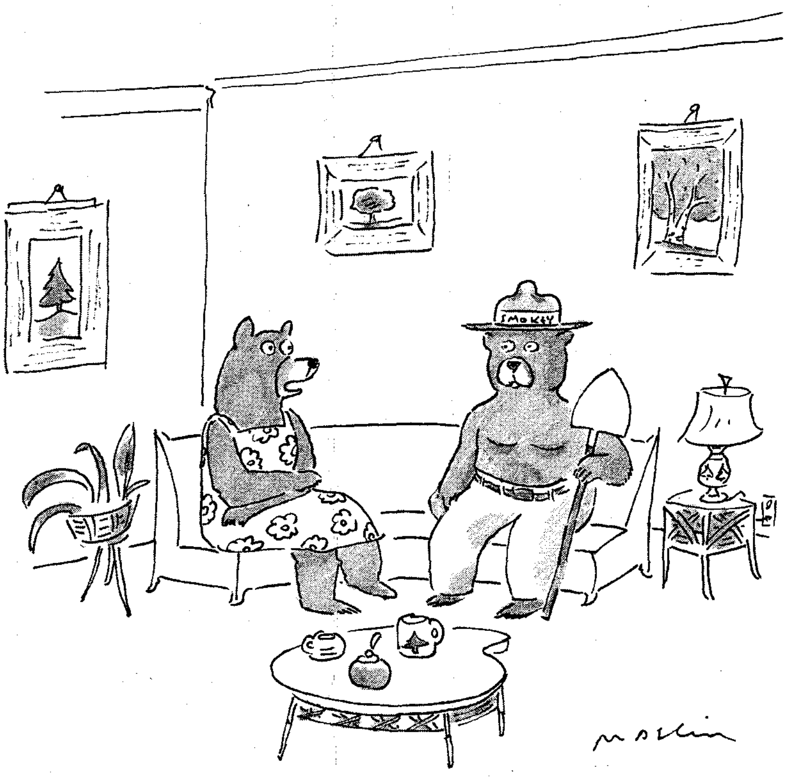
"This résumé appears to cover only the last forty-five minutes."

as the students took their seats he was pacing near his table. He appeared to be either nervous or eager to get going, or maybe he was a combination of both. At the other end of the gym, a camera crew from a production company called the Phoenix Communications Group was getting ready to tape his presentation for possible inclusion in a projected television program to be called "Shear America." (Shear hasn't yet told me exactly what the program will be about, but my guess is that what he and Phoenix have in mind is something like a pop-culture version of the PBS hit "Antiques Road Show.")

Finally, two art students introduced Shear and compared parts of his collection, in flattering terms, to the works of Andy Warhol. Then Shear took the floor. He held up a pair of Levi's bluejeans with a seventy-six-inch waist and a sixty-inch inseam, and said, "I look for what I call the Three 'W's in the things I buy. Usually, 'Wacko,' 'Wonderful,' and . . ." He paused, momentarily stuck, then explained, "There's a third 'W' that escapes me, because I've got things on my mind, but we'll pick it up in a second." (The third "W" turned out to be "Wow.")

He then showed the students a plug-in lunchbox, from the fifties, with covered aluminum-and-glass compartments for heating various delicacies—a product that never caught on with burly working guys. He showed them a handgun-like device, from the sixties, for shooting coins at toll-booth collection baskets—another product that never caught on. He showed them a braided rug made from plastic bread wrappers. He showed them a quilt made from twenty or so bowling shirts, all of which had belonged to a man named Dick. He showed them three paper dresses, a pair of bell-bottom pants printed all over with the logo for Winston cigarettes, and a pair of black-light go-go boots (called "Glo-Glo" boots)—all from the sixties.

The students paid a lot more attention to Shear than I remember paying to assembly speakers when I was a feckless youth. They were especially attentive when Shear commented that if he were ever asked to teach American history he would do away with textbooks and create a curriculum based on "stuff." In partial support of that idea, he told the students about President Truman's 1948 executive order banning segregation in the American armed forces and showed them a framed yearbook-style picture, from 1951, of the members of the 188th Airborne Infantry Regiment, which was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. All the soldiers were black, while their commanding officer—whose head shot was positioned in the center of the picture—was white. The black-regiment picture (which is one of a number of similar photographs that Shear owns) was striking not only because the underlying social division was so starkly rendered but also because, as Shear pointed out, the expressions on the black soldiers' faces seemed almost fiercely patriotic. Shear's photograph didn't convey everything there is to know about race relations in the American military in the early fifties, but it told a more interesting, unsettling, and complicated story than any textbook summary of the basic facts ever could.

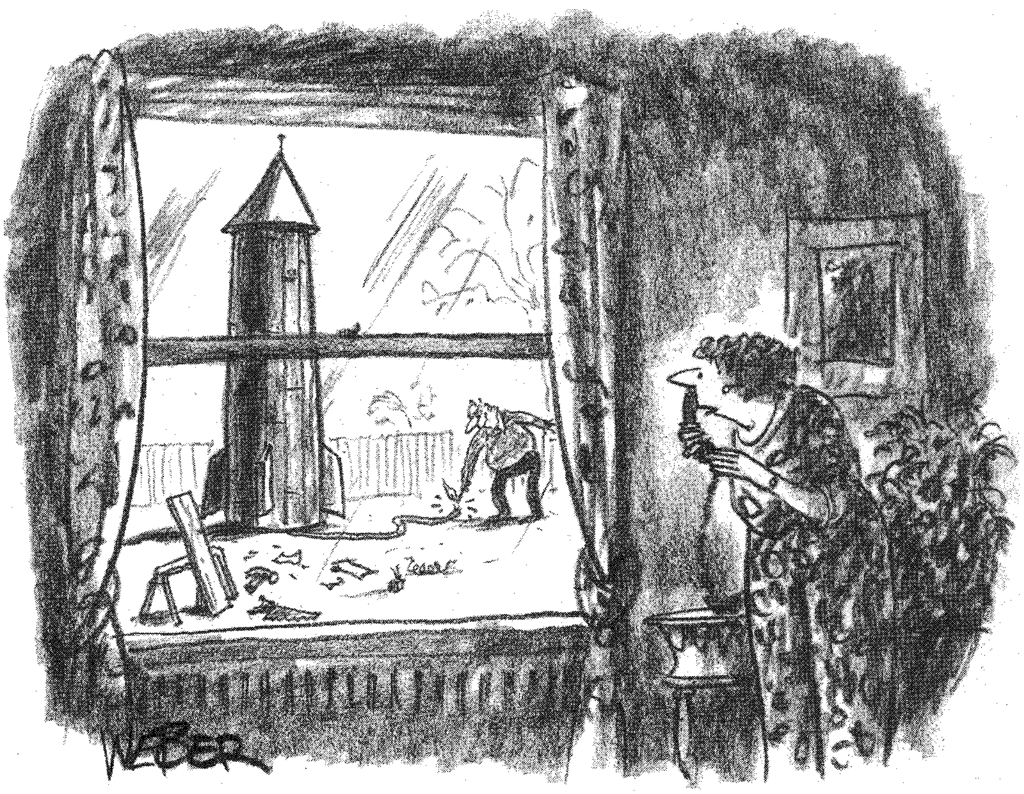


"Only I can prevent forest fires? Don't you think you should share some of the responsibility?"

Shear's feelings about the primacy of stuff probably seem less compelling to serious academic historians, whose conception of the past usually begins with the clashes of nations, than to archeologists, who by necessity contemplate civilization from the other end of the spectrum of human activity. The flea markets that Shear haunts are the kitchen middens of twentieth-century America. (He calls them "reservoirs of pop culture.") Shear owns hundreds of salesmen's samples from the forties and fifties, including smaller-than-life-size versions of bricks, refuse containers, toilets, telephones, carports, prison cells, adding machines, and aboveground swimming pools. The samples aren't just quirky "collectibles"; they are social artifacts from a recent but already deeply buried period of our cultural history. His swimming-pool samples, which are the size of small suitcases, are like frames from a film of the birth of suburbia. In the samples you can see the salesmen who lugged them from door to door, the marginally prosperous young couples who gazed covetously at that smooth blue plastic water, and even the finance companies that lurked in the background. (Aboveground pools, unlike their pricier subterranean cousins, could be repossessed.)

The pool samples also have a sort of nutty beauty, which is most evident when you open all fourteen of Shear's cases at once. You can see the same thing in his sample telephones: they are only fractionally smaller than actual telephones, which they otherwise faithfully reproduce—a fact suggesting that the motivation for creating them was not solely to lighten the burden of the sales force. Maybe miniaturization had, and has, its own inscrutable attraction. Maybe shrinking a telephone (or a pool or a toilet or a brick) transforms it from a commodity into something like a work of art, even if the art in question is merely that greatest of all indigenous American arts—the art of selling.

In any event, Shear has lots of samples.



"It's happened, Marge. Howard has the bomb."

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SHEAR was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1940. His mother's family had emigrated from Romania to Cuba and then from Cuba to Florida, where her parents ran a small department store that catered mainly to Cubans working in the American cigar trade. Shear's father, whose family came from Russia, ran a grocery store in Lancaster and then, beginning when Shear was very young, a wholesale toy-and-merchandise distribution business. Shear says, "My dad had only an eighth-grade education, but he had a gut feeling for where to put his money. He bought fast and took big positions. Even when he went out to buy Tastykakes for the family, he wouldn't buy just two—he would buy two dozen. He had an old brick building, which had once been a cigar warehouse, and he would fill it with seasonal merchandise and what is called impulse merchandise—fad items, like Betty Boop dolls and Li'l Abner's Schmoos. It was a form of gambling, or businessman's risk, like what a Wall Street trader does, and he did it by the seat of his pants. It was in his blood. My dad was not a demonstrative man, but if you talked to him about merchandise his eyes would light up. We communicated with him through stuff."

Shear has one sibling, an identical twin named Ted, who today is a wholesale-food broker in New York. The boys attended Lancaster public schools, built a joint collection of baseball cards, delivered newspapers on their bicycles, and helped out in their father's warehouse. They became teen-agers in the mid-nineteen-fifties—a period that lies near the chronological epicenter of Shear's collection and of his conception of American culture. My guess is that if you forced him to pick a single item to serve as an icon for his entire accumulation of stuff, he would pick a 1957 Chevy convertible—a car that, not coincidentally, was manufactured when he was beginning to drive. "That car not only never died," he explains, "but it keeps coming back, in all kinds of configurations, including telephones"—which, of course, he owns. He also owns a number of long-toothed level-head combs, which have spirit levels in the handles; barbers in the fifties used these combs, in combination with electric razors, to create perfectly planar haircuts. "When I was a teen-ager," Shear says, "I was obsessed with my hair. I had a flat-top crewcut, and it had to be perfectly flat, like the deck of an aircraft carrier. If it was off by two degrees, I would start to sweat in horror, and I would tilt my head two degrees to compensate. I used to go around town looking for barbers with steady hands."

Shear and his brother attended Franklin & Marshall College, in Lancaster. He came within a few credits of earning a degree in sociology—a field that he says inspired in him a passionate interest in the everyday life of twentieth-century Americans—but under pressure from home he majored in accounting. Immediately after graduating, in 1962, he went to work for an accounting firm in New York. A year later, hating his job and fearing the draft, he joined the Army Reserves and spent six months being trained as a "decontamination expert's helper"—a job classification that during the tense aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis seemed scarcely less portentous than the possibility of a tour in Vietnam. While he was on active duty, he did some career-oriented soul-searching and decided that his future lay not in accounting but in merchandise.

"I later realized, with the help of a psychiatrist, that I had become an accountant because my father wished that *he* had been an accountant," he says. "It had nothing to do with me." Back in New York, in the fall of 1965, he set about replacing his father's unrealized ambition with a big-city version of his father's actual occupation: he tried unsuccessfully to win a spot in the executive-training program at Macy's, then answered a newspaper classified ad and talked his way into a better job at the same company. "I told them I didn't need the training program," he says. "I told them I already knew everything about merchandise, and I was so relentless that they hired me. They needed someone to run the Christmas shop at a store they had just opened in Rego Park, starting the next day. It was artificial Christmas trees and Nativity sets, and I said, 'My dad sold all that stuff! This is easy!' The first thing I did was ask if I could work nights, too, because there was so much I wanted to do. They said, 'But we have guard dogs in the store at night,' and I said, 'Dogs don't scare me.'" Sales in Shear's Christmas shop hugely exceeded the company's forecasts, and he was quickly given a succession of more demanding assignments.

In the late sixties, Shear was lured away from Macy's by two J. C. Penney employees he had met in the Army. At Penney's, one of his first and most profitable accomplishments was persuading the management to shift the chain's emphasis from white bedsheets to printed ones—high-margin products that at Penney's in those days were considered exotic items and were referred to within the company as "fancies." He also transformed Penney's approach to kitchens. Penney's had always sold glassware, kitchen curtains, rugs, and cutlery in separate departments and had made no effort to coördinate colors or styles across different lines. Shear wrote a lengthy proposal suggesting that the company impose unified design themes and pull everything into a single department, to be called the Kitchen Shop. For Penney's, this was a radical idea, but Shear was given permission to try it.

In rethinking the chain's approach to kitchens, Shear looked to his past. "I went back to Pennsylvania and talked to my mother, who was a loyal Penney's customer," he says. "And then I went down and looked at the stuff she had in her basement, and then I went out to the flea markets and started buying. What I was doing was buying back the American kitchen of the twentieth century. I bought early Rubbermaid and Tupperware, and I bought four hundred sets of old kitchen curtains, and I bought used pots and pans—all with my own money. I went a little overboard, but that's me—if I'm in, I'm in. I was building a three-dimensional design library, because I believe that there are no new ideas: we just keep reinventing what already exists. So I would take, say, a curtain from 1938 and overlay it with the current color forecast from *House & Garden*, and then I would go to the designers and say, 'This is what I want.'" The intensity of Shear's focus was notable in an era when a homemaker who changed the color of her dish towels was considered to have redecorated her kitchen. As a result of Shear's changes, Penney's kitchen business soared, and Shear moved on to bathrooms.

As Shear was building his private portfolio of secondhand housewares, he was also buying other items. Scanning flea-market tables for interesting pieces of Tupperware, he would sometimes glimpse a plaything he had once loved, and be overwhelmed by memories of his youth. "When I was a kid, I never really had toys of my own," he explains. "My brother and I were allowed to borrow toys from my father's warehouse, but we had to return them in perfect condition and we never got first pickings. It's like the shoemaker's children going barefoot. The warehouse was a lending library—I never had a sense of ownership. When I saw those toys again, in the flea markets, I wanted to own them. I would be shopping for pots and pans, but I would get distracted by plastic cars. I had an intense nostalgia experience, and I basically began buying back my father's warehouse. I had my dad's entire listing of accounts in my head, and I bought them all back." The urge to buy old toys was so powerful that staying focussed became an ordeal. Just two more toasters, he would tell himself, and I'll treat myself to a tin truck.

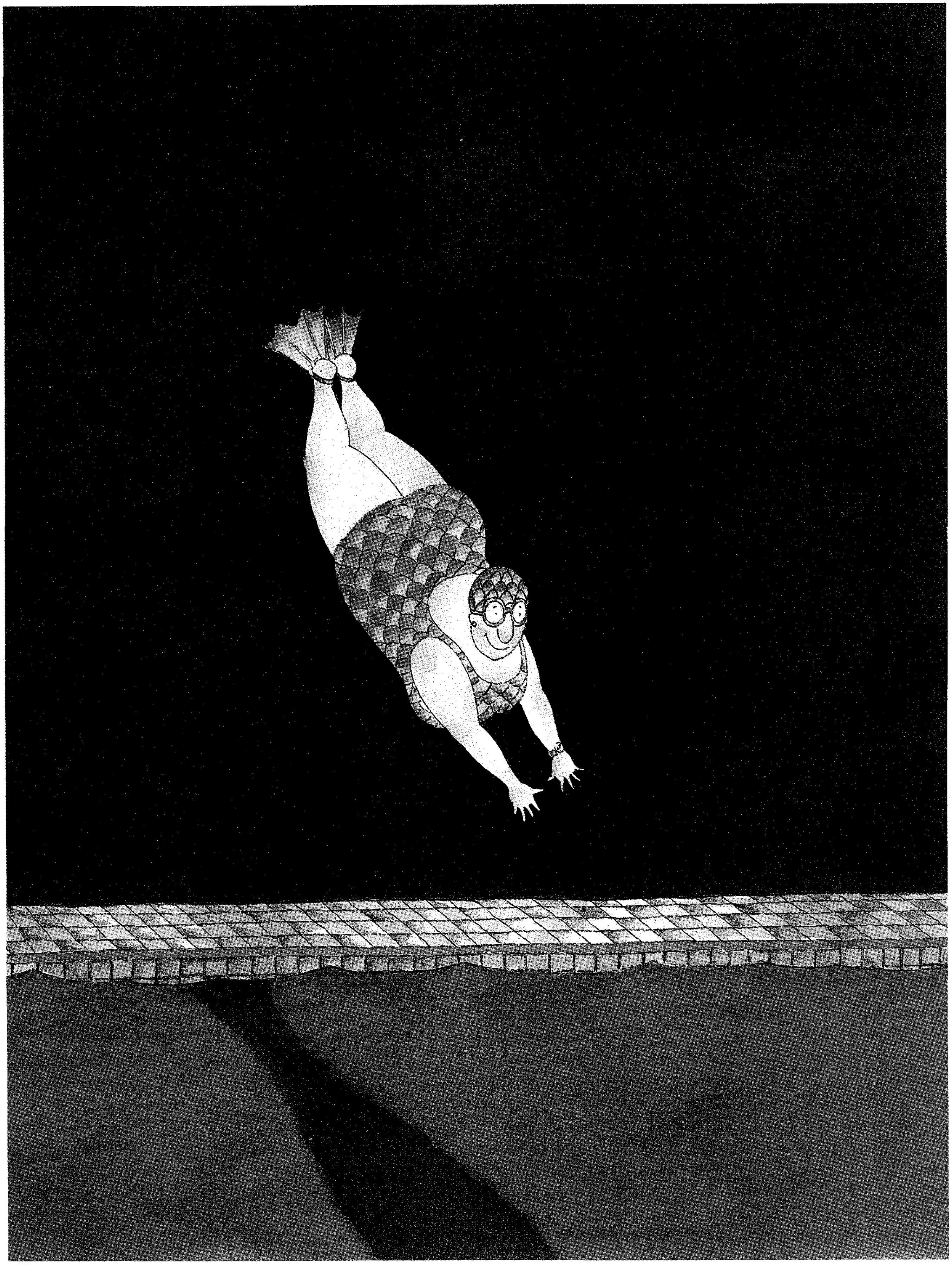
Initially, he stored most of his flea-market purchases in the basement of his mother's house, in Lancaster. When the basement filled up, he borrowed a barn. Meanwhile, his career thrived. He left Penney's in the seventies to become an independent designer of kitchen textiles, housewares, and children's clothing. Licenses for several dozen of his creations—among them various kitchen items decorated with smiling fruits and vegetables—brought him a very large income, and the royalty stream continued well into the nineteen-eighties. With a growing bankroll, he was able to make ever more extensive forays into the flea markets. Then the royalty income dwindled to nothing, and he tapped his retirement savings as well. He told himself that he was merely shifting assets from one form of investment to another, although at that time, in the late eighties, most of his purchases seemed valuable to no one but him.

Shear's collection was not only expanding; it was also becoming an increasingly direct projection of his inner life. Around 1971, for example, he sued a company that had infringed on one of his most lucrative licenses, a line of colorful kitchen designs called Café Gingham. He received a large settlement, but the case had taken seven years to work its way through United States District Court. "It was during that lawsuit that I started collecting military memorabilia," he says. "I saw myself as a field-grade officer. I was doing battle with these lawyers and these people who had stolen my ideas, and I started wearing khaki clothes to court and buying sculptures that soldiers in the trenches had made out of shell casings." Shear also began buying products that were trademark violations of other products. "I now have a lot of them—things like a soda pop called 7-Down and candles in striped packages called LiteSavers. I lost all my friends over this case, practically, except two. But this was one of my golden periods of buying. The lawyers told me to let them handle things, so I left town. I would call them from pay phones and ask them how things were going. I had a lot of money, and I had a sixteen-foot truck, which I was renting, and I drove around the country filling it up."

The collection began to dominate Shear's life. With his settlement from the lawsuit, he bought his current apartment and began to fill it with merchandise. The transformation alarmed friends and family members, who didn't understand why he was spending a fortune on what looked to them like junk. The collection was already enormous by 1978, when Shear met the woman who would become his wife—they married two years later, and their sons were born in 1982 and 1985—but it continued to grow, and its growth almost certainly contributed to the dissolution of their marriage, in 1990. For Shear, though, buying felt like salvation. When he talks

SKETCHBOOK BY VICTORIA ROBERTS

SPLASH



about his collection today, he can work himself into a state of almost frantic enthusiasm, yet when he walks among the stalls of a flea market he becomes tranquil and intent.

BACK in March, I joined Shear in Atlantic City for Atlantique City—a huge, semi-upscale flea market, which was billed by its promoters as "the largest indoor antique and collectibles fair in the world." Shear had asked me to meet him at around seven o'clock that morning outside the doors of the convention center, which was scheduled to open to the public at ten. I had trouble dragging myself out of bed and didn't make my way over to the show until almost eight-thirty, by which time the crowd outside the doors looked very little like a line and very much like the adult population of the United States. Miraculously, I spotted Shear near a set of turnstiles on the far shore of a sea of impatient humanity. The guard at the turnstiles didn't want to let me enter, but Shear reached deep into his conversational reserves, and the guard eventually realized that the only way for him to return to life as he had once known it would be to let me pass.

UNE VIE SANS AILLEURS

but why does the heart still stir
remembering its dark wings?
and where this wind, down from a hushed sky
bending the trees that silently quake?

and this choked scream unfurling
black as a bird shot up from the reeds
and all those blind houses
where the dying fasten their breath
to the steam on the windows
who cares about the color of the night watchman's coat
since when do feathers scud across the patio
what's the point in remembering,
in paraphrasing dusk?
or the sun behind a woman's eye in early morning
or the woman in the sun, under a weighted branch?
how many dead lie openmouthed in the mines?

the blood is dry and the embers' ash forgotten
in the cold earth—
out of a forest bristling with ice blue stars
the wind unfolds its dark wings:
but what does the heart have left to sing?

—Breyten Breytenbach

(*Translated, from the Afrikaans, by Rita Dove.*)

When the doors to the exhibition hall finally opened, at first I had trouble keeping up with my guide. Shear believes that the best buying opportunities at any show take place during the first hour or so, before the experts have skimmed the best items, and he likes to begin at whatever part of the auditorium appears to him to be the most counterintuitive starting point—in this case, the booths with the highest numbers. He walked briskly and kept up a running commentary: "I can tell from a distance of fifteen feet whether a seller is likely to have anything I want. I buy quickly and I almost never make mistakes. When I do make mistakes, I learn from them. . . . This, for me, is not a cerebral experience anymore. It's all visceral. I buy what speaks to me. . . . This guy is—how shall I say it?—too sterile. He has spent too many hours with the price guides. . . . The model-train guys are the worst—the most anal-retentive. They're forever polishing and lining up. . . . Circus stuff I don't like. . . . I own this already, but I'd buy it again. . . . I hate this stuff—I call it 'boomerabilia.' It looks like an aisle at Toys R Us. . . . When a guy spreads out just a few items, like this, it means he's out on the floor buying. It's like a bodega with no food—you know there's something else going on. I used to do that, too. I used to take tables at shows just to get first crack at the stuff. . . . Many of these dealers are soulless, so it's no surprise that their stuff is soulless. My stuff is *alive.*"

Among his purchases were artists' renderings of two unbuilt General Motors cars from the fifties; an early-sixties board game for girls called "What Shall I Be?" in which the only career options, according to the picture on the box, were ballerina, stewardess, teacher, actress, nurse, and beauty queen; an old Fizzies knockoff called Nufizz, which promised "no more bottle fuss"; and some plastic drinking straws from the sixties that had been marketed, with all the innocent frivolity of the pre-Heimlich-maneuver era, as "colorful peashooters." He became agitated only once, when he suddenly spotted what he at first described to me in a breathless whisper as the best piece in the show—a salesman's sample of an aluminum rowboat. He was disturbed, though, because he couldn't figure out initially why such a prime item hadn't sold already; he calmed down, gradually, as he noticed a number of serious defects in the sample, among them the absence of a manufacturer's nameplate. Then he went back to his systematic wandering. By the time the show closed, at ten that night, he had spent several thousand dollars.

Shear once told me, "I feel like I sleepwalked through the first twenty-five years of my life." The moment of his awakening coincided with his adult immersion in the world of merchandise, and his sense of liberation grew as he surrendered himself to the flea markets. "Being a twin was like being incarcerated," he says. "When society sees you as a unit, you have a job that's bigger than you. I dislike being 'alike' so much that that's why I always climb up the back side of the mountain—there's too much traffic on the front. I used to answer to my brother's name, because I didn't know who I was. Will Alex Shear please stand up? I always used to fantasize that a guy in a fifties Argyle sweater would stand up, and the sweater would be empty.

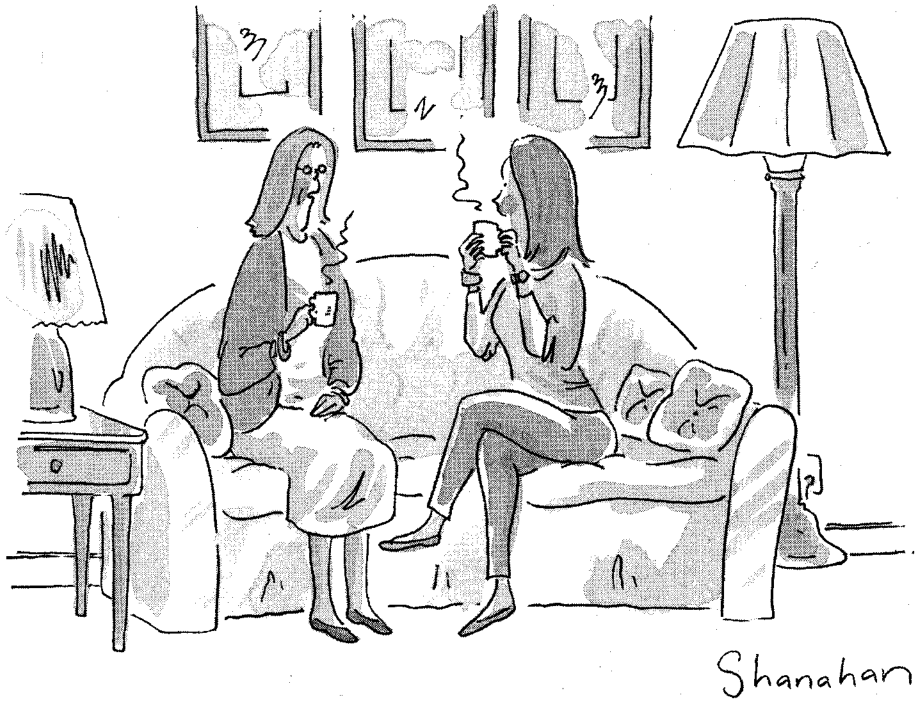
"It was in the fields that I started to find myself, and I believe that in those fields are many of the answers to this life. Is my collection autobiographical? You'd better believe it. A lot of my life is in the stuff. I believe that there is truth out there, in pure form, in consumer products—because human beings touched them, used them, loved them, hated them. The stuff speaks to me. When I go to the markets, I like to find a place where I can stand up high and look out over everything from a distance. I took my boys with me to one of the big shows once, and when we got there I took them over to a little knoll off on one side where I always like to go, and before we went inside we looked out over all these yellow tents, which seemed like they went on for miles, and I said to them, 'Boys, this is Constantinople.'"

A FEW years ago, at a moment when Shear was feeling unusually alone and misunderstood (by relatives, antique dealers, and others), he complained to a friend, and the friend, who was a graphic artist, suggested that Shear write a letter to the architect Robert Venturi. Venturi, who won the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1991, is the author, with his partners Denise Scott Brown (who is also his wife) and Steven Izenour, of "Learning from Las Vegas," a controversial and highly influential book, first published in 1972, which grew out of its authors' determination "to gain insight from the commonplace" and to analyze "the iconography of urban sprawl." The friend felt that Shear's collection, which is nothing if not a celebration of the commonplace, might appeal to Venturi. Shear wrote the letter, and not long afterward Venturi, accompanied by some of his associates, took a field trip to Manhattan from their firm's headquarters, in Philadelphia. Venturi was deeply impressed. Since that moment, the collector has viewed the architect as a mentor and maybe even as something of a father figure, although Venturi is not quite old enough to be Shear's father.

When I asked Venturi what it was about Shear that appealed to him, he replied, "Americans in general, and especially highfalutin Americans, have this problem of being utterly ashamed of the commercial dimension of America. And that's sad, because it is one of the most vital parts of our society, and it's something that people in the rest of the world really kind of admire us for. Our materialism embarrasses us, and yet I can think of worse things a person could do than try to seduce someone to buy something. Advertising is not a new thing. We think of the stained-glass windows in Chartres Cathedral as art, but when they were made they were art only incidentally. They were put there to sell theology—they were billboards—and if the people who built the cathedral had had neon they would have gone crazy for it. There's nothing new about any of this. The mosaics in Byzantine churches and early Christian churches are billboards selling Christianity. Tiepolo's ceilings are Counter-Reformation propaganda. Selling is an old tradition, and we can learn from it. Alex's collection embodies that commercial dimension of our culture. In his own way, Alex is a genius."

The unironic representation of everyday life has been mostly missing from serious American art in the twentieth century. (If you are skeptical, check out the current survey show of American Art to 1958 at the Whitney.) "High" artists have ceded the commonplace to illustrators, advertisers, packaging designers, and other creators of what we tend to think of dismissively as visual ephemera. "If you want an evocative depiction of our culture at this stage in our history," Shear once told me, "don't go to an art museum—look in your refrigerator." Shear's collection is powerful because, through some sorcery of juxtaposition, it makes "stuff" seem like a kind of answer. The effect is more than that of mere nostalgia. Shear's collection is a portrait and a window and a mirror all at once. His coconut-head sculptures, printed-cardboard egg cartons, yo-yo advertisements, and streamlined vacuum cleaners provide a direct and beguiling link to a part of ourselves that we have taught ourselves not to see—or, at any rate, not to respect.

For Venturi and his partners, Shear represents a sort of jubilant affirmation of long-held ideas of theirs about the significance, beauty, humor, ingenuity, and usefulness of plain old popular American culture. For the less academically inclined, Shear's collection usually provokes a more nakedly emotional response: the stuff pulls you in. The effect has less to do with specific pieces than with all those teetering piles—and with the man who piled them up. The collection has what I can think of only as narrative force. Shear's feel for the American vernacular is as deep and engaging as Mark Twain's. The collection is like a vast, sprawling comic novel—one written not in words but in things. The novel's unlikely narrator is a middle-aged guy



"I suppose it was very sweet and old-fashioned of him, but, still, it was syphilis."

from Pennsylvania; its central character is the rambunctious and ludicrously self-confident soul of the American Century.

FOR most of the past thirty-five years, Shear's collection has been private to the point of invisibility, except to anyone who has crossed the threshold of his apartment. Recently, as Shear has exposed more of his stuff to the public, he has found himself in the infinitely more complex position of sharing his obsession with other people. He views that change mostly as a personal triumph. He has always believed that he is on to something interesting and important, and a growing group of people now share that belief. The baby-boom generation is sinking into its reflective, backward-looking middle age, and to some people Shear now seems a little like a prescient land speculator who went in early and bought up the choicest lots. He has just agreed to a deal with a major consumer-products manufacturer, which wants to use him (accompanied by various items from his collection) as a pop-culture expert in a nostalgic marketing campaign for products it plans to introduce later this year. And a lot of other people have been talking with him as well.

Among those people are Jay and Carolyn Haverson, the principals of a Greenwich, Connecticut, architecture firm. Over the past few years, the Haversons have invested a great deal of time and money in the possibility of creating a museum devoted to Shear's collection—a project on which Venturi and his partners have occasionally offered advice. Jay Haverson met Shear several years ago. That meeting took place at Shear's apartment, which, Haverson says, "was so cluttered with stuff that you literally could not walk through it." In the course of a typically lengthy conversation that day, Shear told Haverson about a long-standing dream of his: to create what he had once described to me as "a museum for regular people." The Haversons may be ideally suited to implement such a dream. Recent design projects of theirs include the Motown Café at the New York New York Hotel and Casino, and the Harley-Davidson Café, both in Las Vegas. In addition, Jay Haverson served as the consultant in charge of the retail portion of the 42nd Street Now! project, which is headed by the architect Robert A. M. Stern and is responsible for much of the ongoing renovation of Times Square. One of the Haversons' early ideas was to turn the old Liberty Theatre, on Forty-second Street just west of Broadway, into a multimedia "entertainment center" called the Museum of Great American Stuff and to house much of Shear's collection inside it.

The Liberty Theatre idea has been shelved, at least temporarily—mostly as a result of difficulties related to the site—but the museum project is still very much alive, and the Haversons' intricately detailed drawings for the Times Square site convey the flavor of what they and Shear have in mind as a showcase for the collection. Upon entering the museum, visitors would walk down a long promenade that reproduces an American highway roadside circa 1955. From there, they would ascend by means of a gently sloping escalator (a touch suggested by Venturi) to several levels of open, meandering, stuff-packed exhibit space. Rising on the escalator, they would move along a sort of aural time line of classic television commercials—which for contemporary Americans provide the same kind of shared cultural reference points that were once supplied by dusty old Latin and Greek. There would be a restaurant—perhaps modelled on a nineteen-fifties Woolworth lunch counter, which Shear would re-create by using items he has gathered over the years—and a large shop in which visitors could buy meticulous reproductions of items in Shear's collection.

THE notion that pieces owned by Shear might have broad popular appeal has been strengthened recently by the remarkable success of the Internet auction company eBay. Items like those that Shear bought years ago for next to nothing—many types of salesmen's samples, for instance—now sometimes sell for thousands of dollars in on-line auctions. A couple of months ago, I asked Shear what he thought of eBay, and he was dismissive.

"There are some categories that I do scan from time to time," he said, "but

"I have a food question."

it's lower grade than I'm interested in. You see, much of what's on eBay has what is known as an intrinsic value, and I am not interested in that. I am not part of that world. I am buying from a completely different point of view. I'm buying things that seemingly have no intrinsic value, but they have other value that interests me."

"But you know, Alex," I said, "if your museum or your TV show or your book becomes successful, your stuff is going to start looking valuable to other people, too."

"Pots and pans?"

"Yes. All the things you like. Other people are going to want them."

He brooded. "You're right. I know they are."

"You're going to get priced out of your own market."

He thought about that for a while. "Well, that's O.K.," he said finally. "I have no problem, because as long as new products are being developed, there are going to be mistakes, and it's going to take a long time for people to get off on mistakes the way I do. There is always something for me to buy no matter where I go, so I won't be bothered."

I could tell, though, that the idea of eBay was gnawing at him. I wasn't surprised when, a few weeks later, he called to say that he was flying to California the next day for an exploratory meeting with a number of executives at eBay. That meeting went very well, Shear told me later, and there is now the possibility of building a relationship. (Shear took one of his sons along and introduced him as his technology adviser.) More meetings are planned.

It isn't hard to imagine Shear becoming to on-line auctions what Frank Perdue was to chickens. He could be the Martha Stewart of stuff. Or he could become something else entirely. Over the past year or so, he has been inundated with tantalizing proposals—for books, for licensing deals, for television shows, for all sorts of collaborations—and he is still trying to sort out what he wants to do most. The sudden multiplicity of options is inebriating, but it also creates a problem: his collection can't live six different lives. My sense is that Shear, with so many possibilities on the horizon, is on some level relieved that plans for a full-scale museum are on hold. I wonder, too, if he doesn't feel a deeper ambivalence. A museum, after all, is a tomb. How will he feel when his deepest and most vital passion is enclosed, once and for all, behind glass? Initially, I'm sure, he'll feel jubilant. Soon, though, he is bound to find himself on the outside looking in. I picture him then as a daily visitor to his own mausoleum, his arms weighed down with shopping bags.

Or maybe I'm just projecting my own misplaced anxieties. Shortly after I first met Shear, seven years ago, I had the slightly unsettling feeling that he had collected me; now I occasionally worry that I may be just one of a growing group of outsiders who have in some sense collected him. It's a situation he knows well. Earlier this year, he said to me, "I've met a lot of people who say they like my world, but I have to be very careful, because I have a certain vision and I don't want people reinterpreting what I see. I have corrective lenses in my glasses, and if you don't have my prescription you can't see what I see. You might say you can, but I really have to spend time with you to make sure you respect my pots and pans at the same level I do. And, over the years, I have usually found that people don't. It's disappointing, but that's the way it is."

Of course, artists of all types face the same predicament at some point, when their most precious works cease to belong solely to them and become mainly the property of their interpreters. Shear is approaching that point now, and his collection is ultimately so personal that the change is certain to have a major impact on his life. Jeff Sewald, a producer and writer who has been a creative adviser to Shear for half a dozen years, says, "People often miss the fact that the greatest object in Alex's entire collection is Alex himself." Shear reminded me of that fact recently, toward the end of a nearly endless telephone conversation. Long after I had lost most of my ability to follow what he was saying, he suddenly began to discuss, indirectly, the origin of his urge to collect, and I started paying attention again. "Was it out of pain?" he asked rhetorically—a question I had never thought to ask. And then he gave his own answer, which startled me a little, even though I had known it all along: "Well, it wasn't out of pleasure." ♦

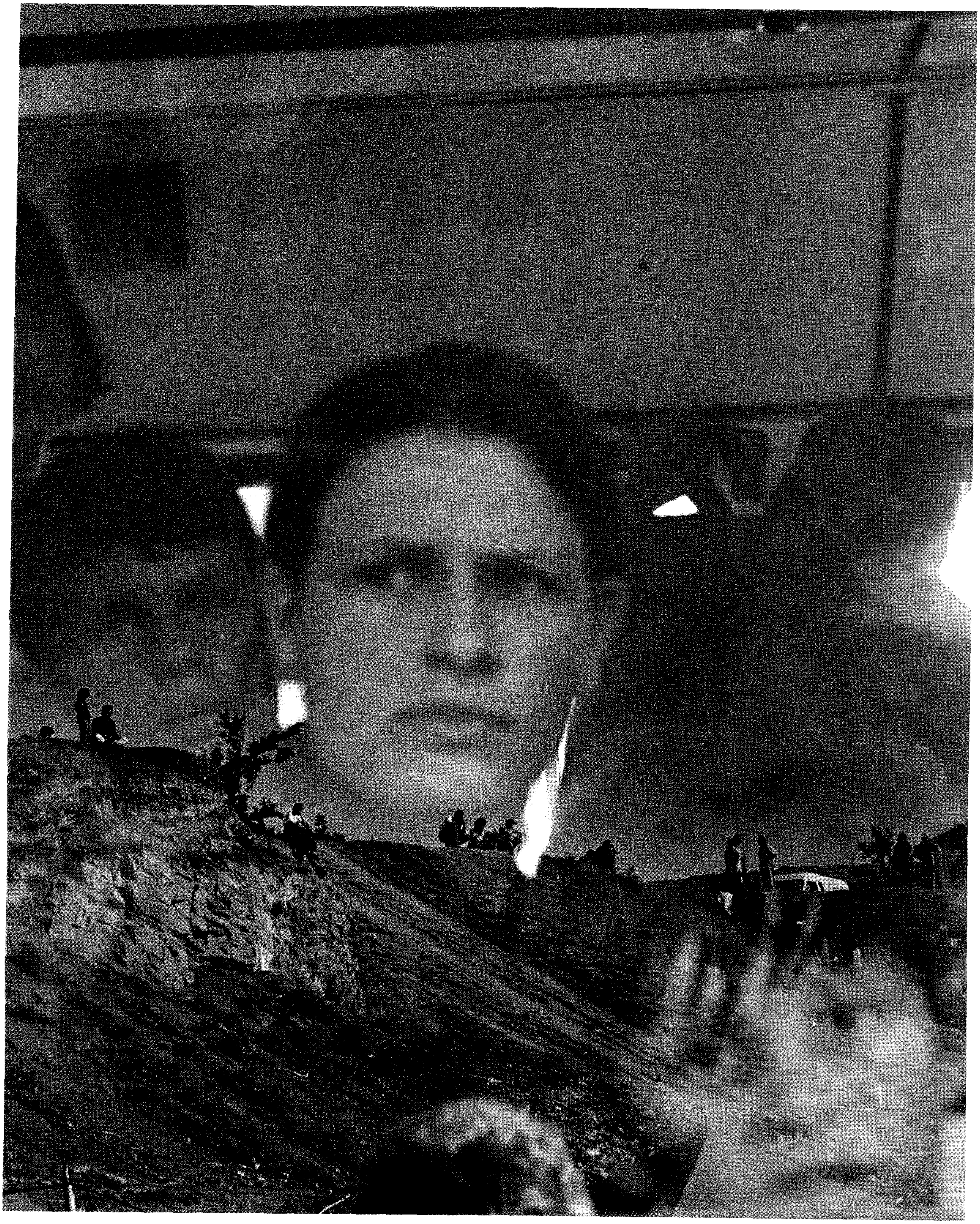
WARDEN
BOOTH

"You bludgeoned your cell mate during chapel services, Rhineschreiber! Shame on you!"

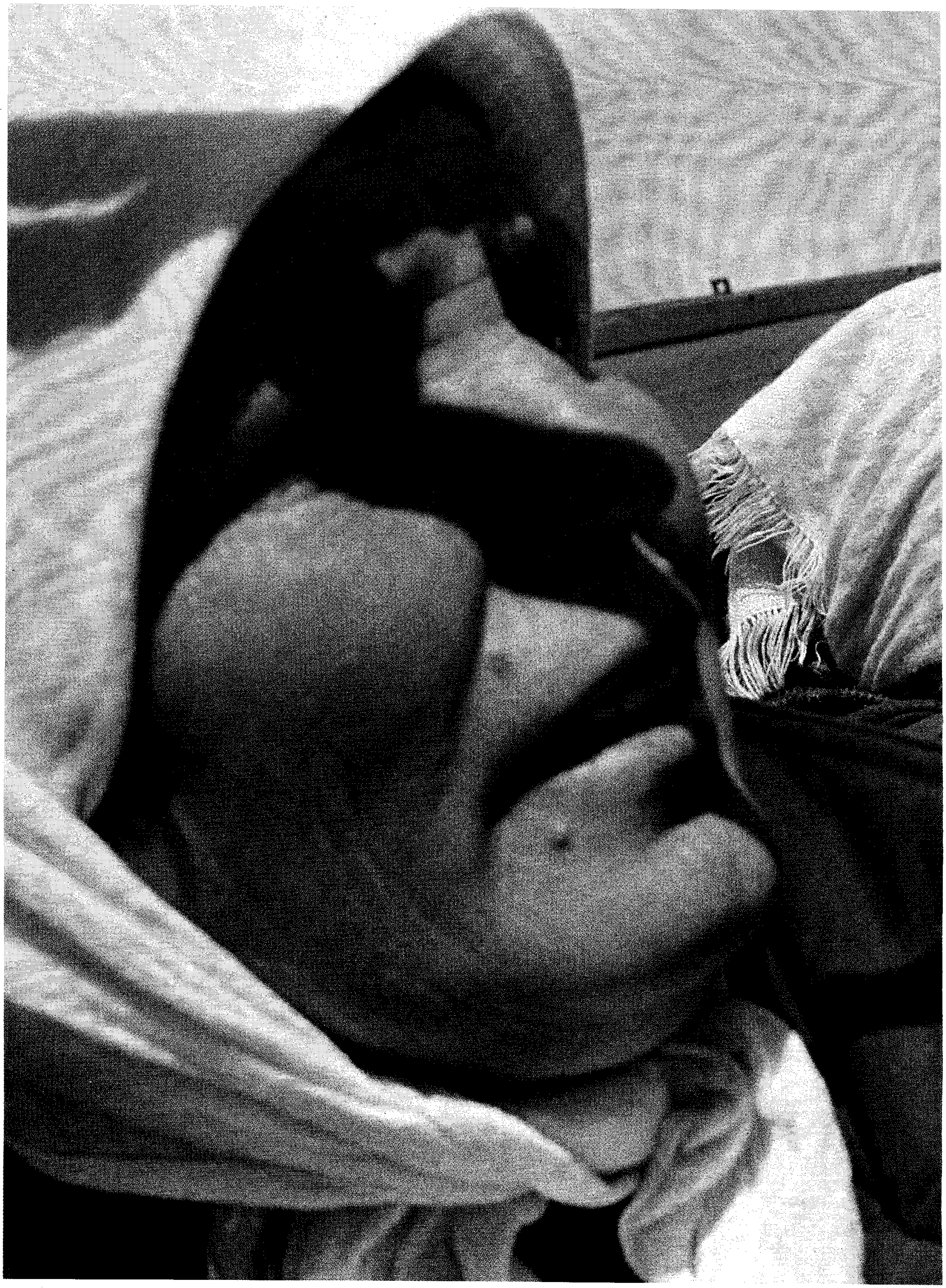
• •

EXILE AND RETURN

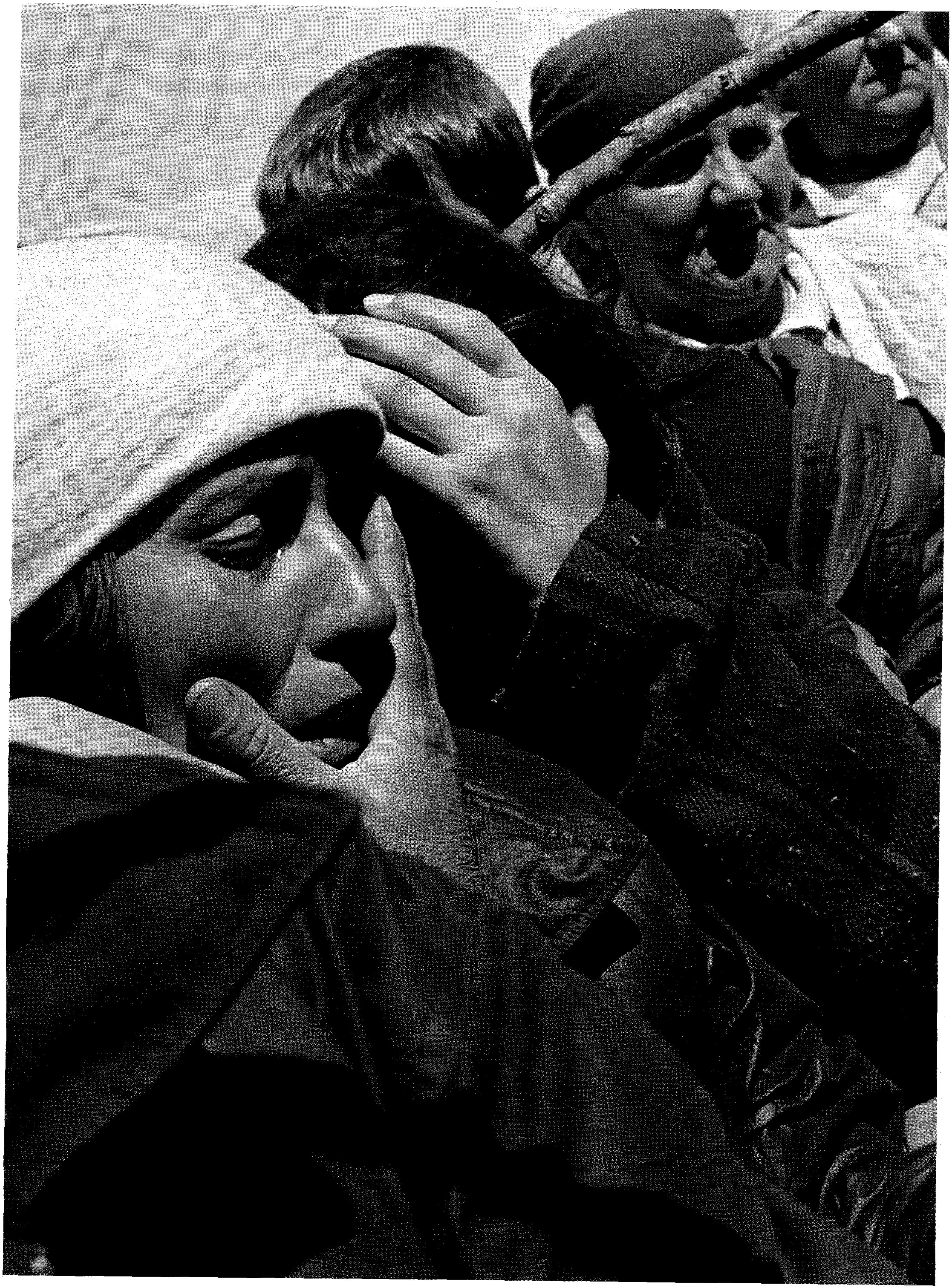
BY GILLES PERESS



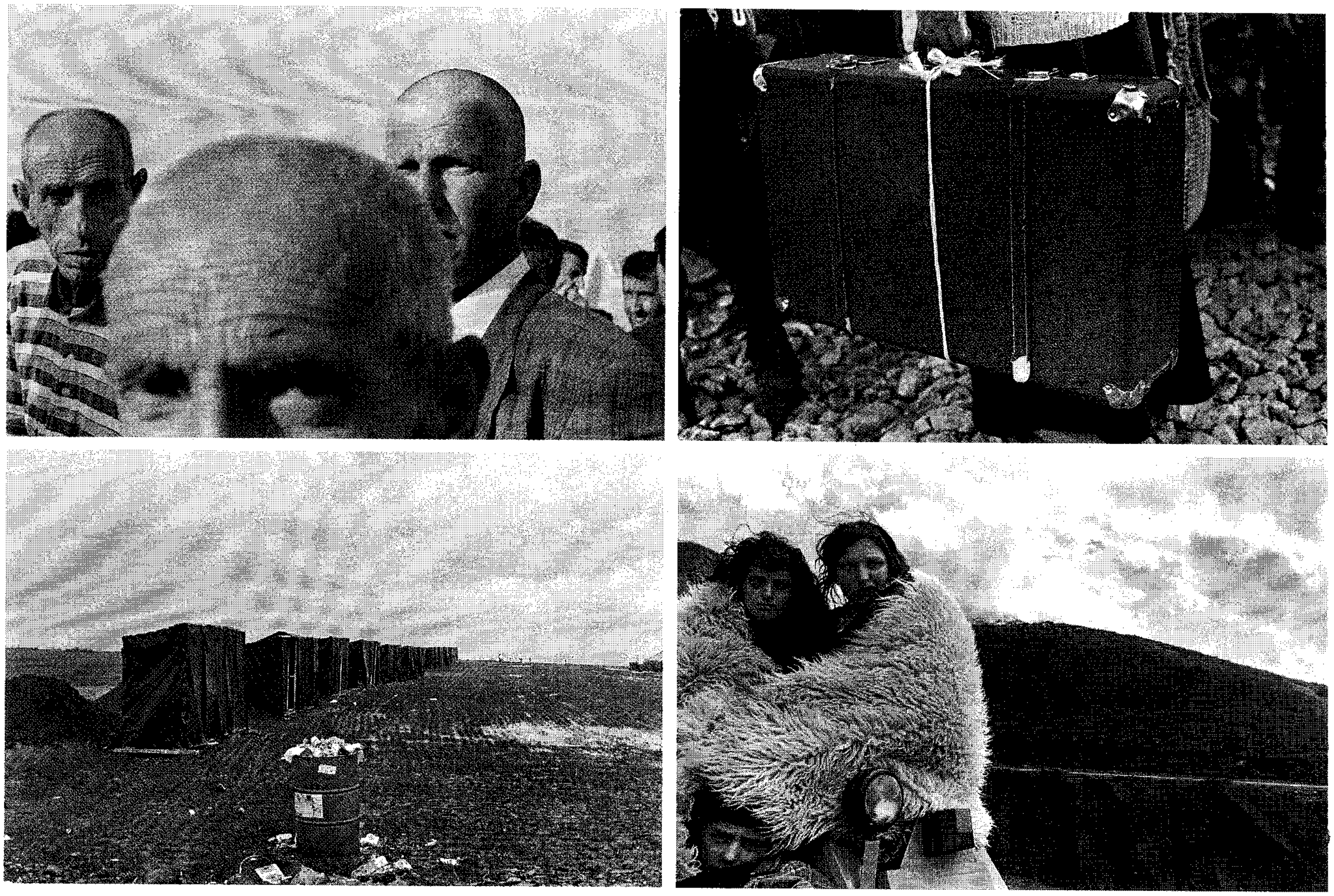
Kosovar Albanian refugees fled Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian "cleansers" and began arriving in Macedonia in March, only to find that most Macedonians did not want them there, either. Local officials confined this group for hours in extreme heat on a bus between the border and the Stenkovec refugee camp.



Forced to leave their men behind, Kosovar women in a tractor-pulled cart trundle into exile in northern Albania at the Morini

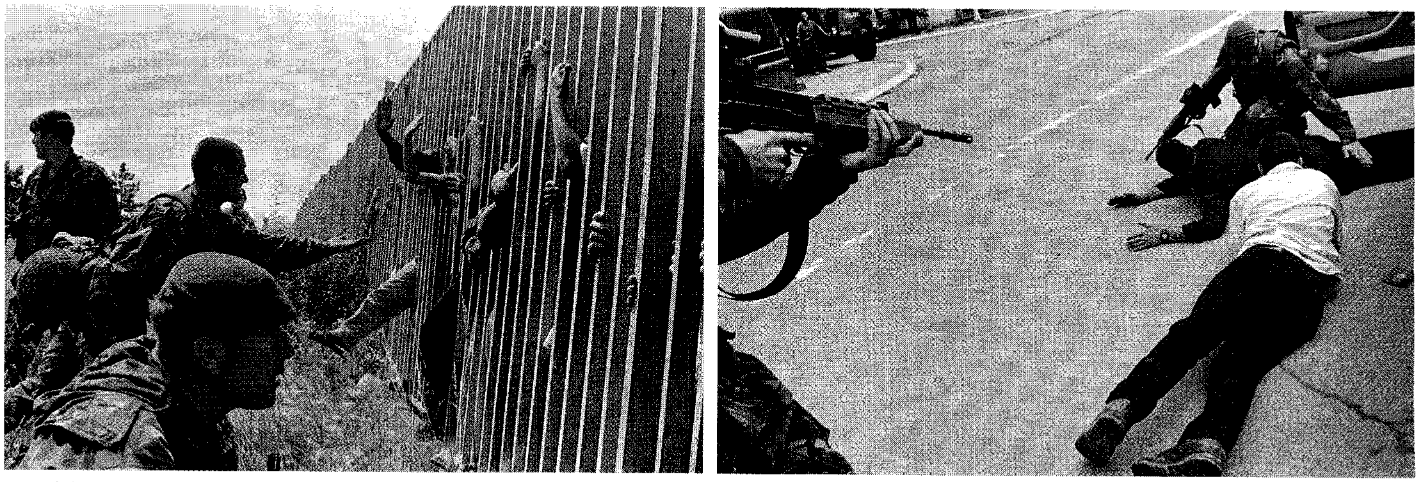


border crossing, where tens of thousands of refugees arrived each day during the mass expulsions in late March and early April.



"HISTORY always seems to go either too fast or too slow," the photographer Gilles Peress said the other day, after returning to New York from Kosovo. "In the Balkans, we've seen both extremes. For a decade, NATO had watched Milosevic work his evil. So the decision to stop him, in March, finally came, very late. But then, suddenly, in only three months, we saw a full sweep of history, an entire land emptied, its people stripped of identity, scattered, and—even more quickly than they left—returning, to celebrate their liberation and to reckon the price that they had paid for it."

For the photographer, the speed and the enormity of the expulsion of more than a million Kosovars by Serbian "cleansers" meant that one was never simply looking at what was happening but seeking also to glimpse in each instant the drama that had preceded it. None of the people in these pictures appear to notice the camera, no matter how close it is; even when we can look directly into their eyes they do not meet our gaze. What are they seeing, and what have they seen? It was only

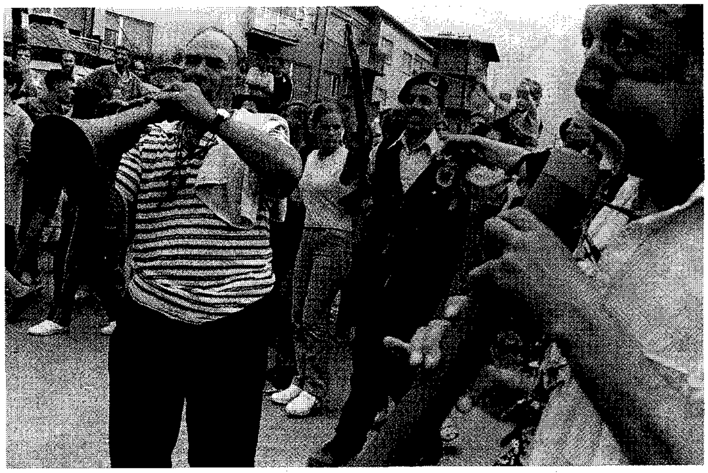


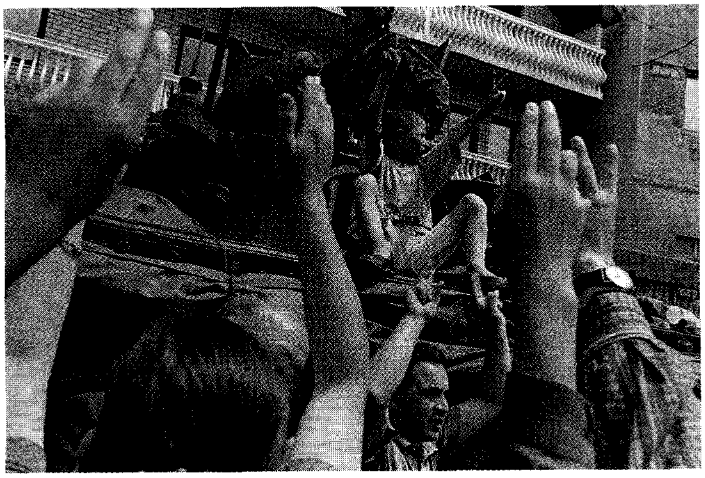
Top: Kosovar refugees in Macedonia and Albania include an old woman, her wrists broken by Serbs, who died by the road, and i
Kosovo, celebrations in Prizren. Bottom: British paratroopers in Pristina greet Kosovar survivors and arrest Kosovo Liberation Army

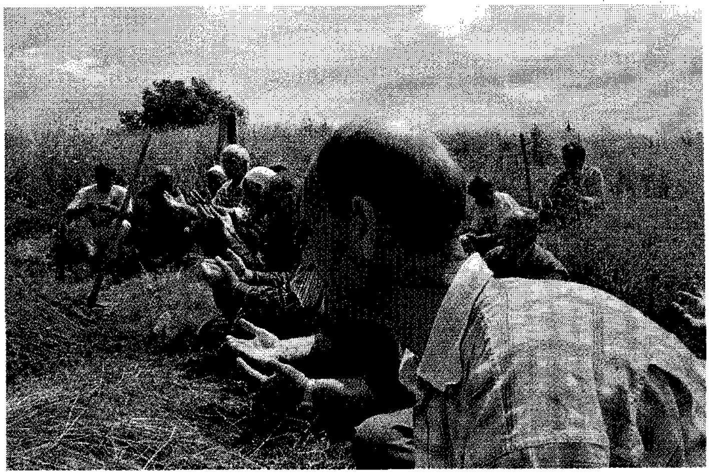
when the refugees began to rush homeward into Kosovo's ruins, following Milosevic's capitulation, that we on the outside began to glimpse the extent of the devastation they had fled.

Between the beginning of April and the end of June, Peress made two monthlong trips to the refugee-swamped borderlands of northern Albania and Macedonia, and after the Serbian withdrawal he returned with the exiles to Kosovo. Large areas of towns—Djakovica, Prizren, Velika Krusa—that had become familiar to us as the settings of refugees' stories turned out to be so destroyed and emptied of life that they survived intact only as memories. "Being there," the photographer said, "was about witnessing total fragmentation and about knowing that it was impossible to document it all—knowing that you would fail." Still, his photographs shear through the hurly-burly and draw us into an immediate intimacy with his subjects.

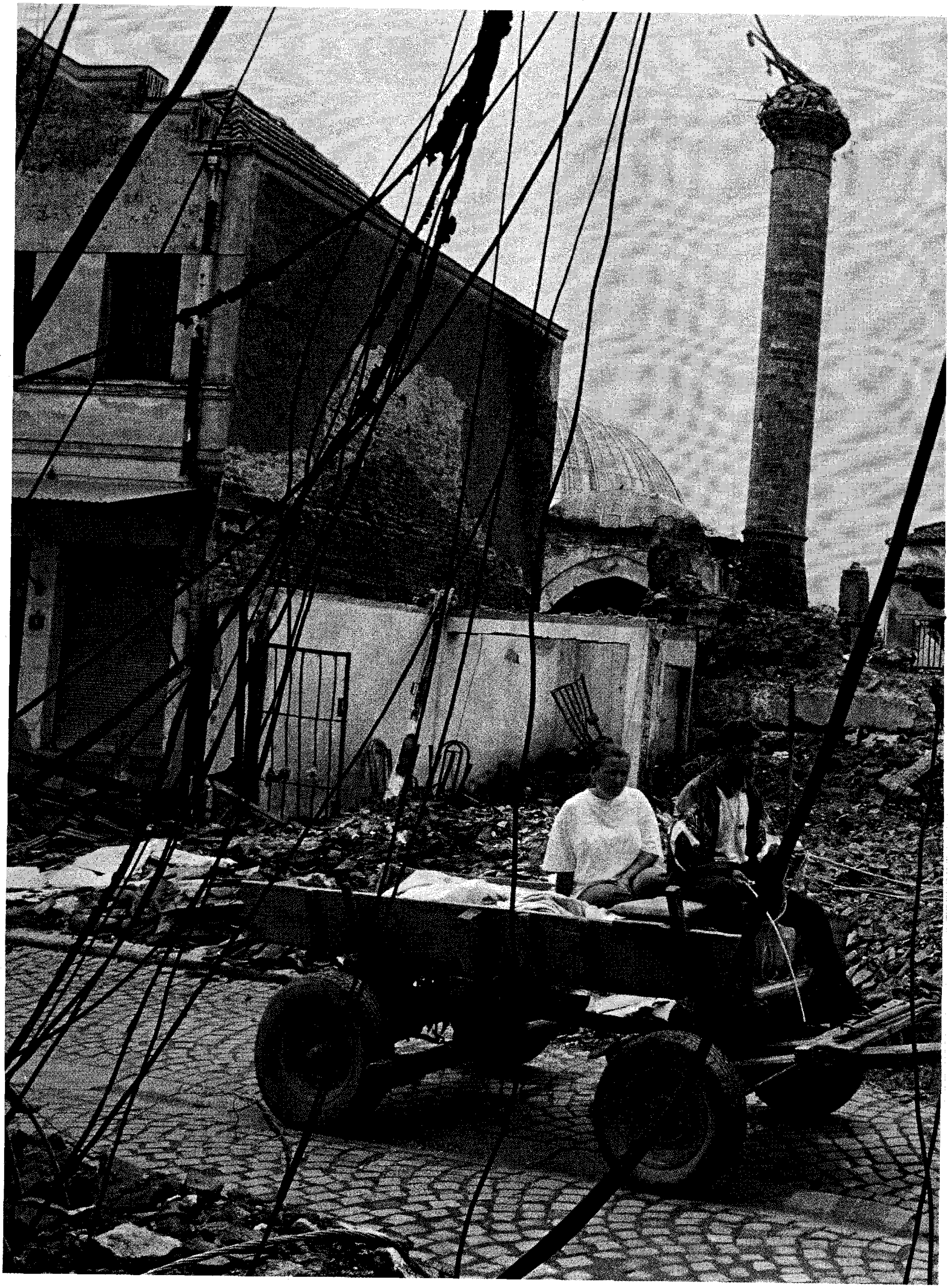
Kosovo, which officially remains a province of Milosevic's Yugoslavia, albeit under the administration of NATO and the



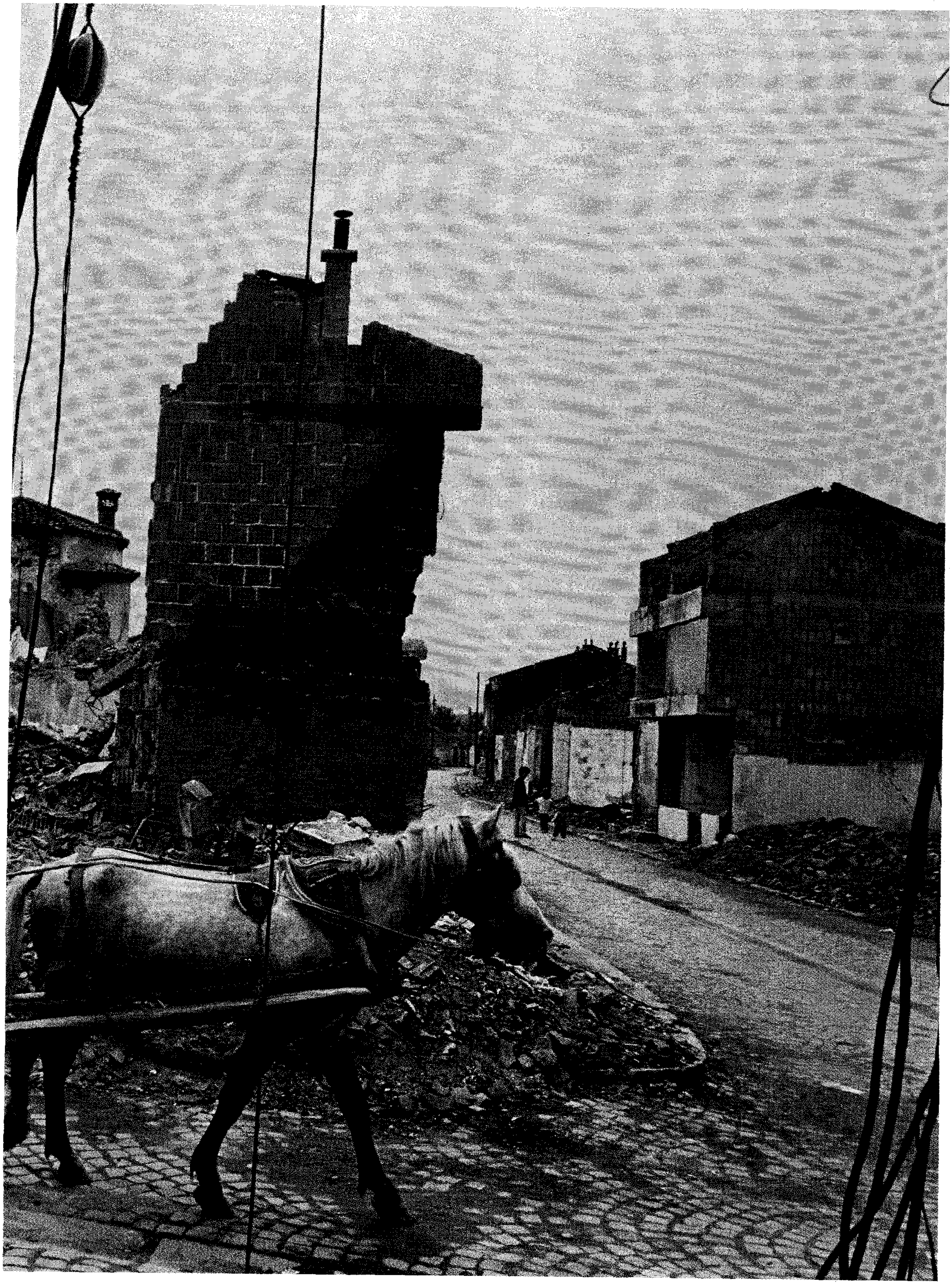




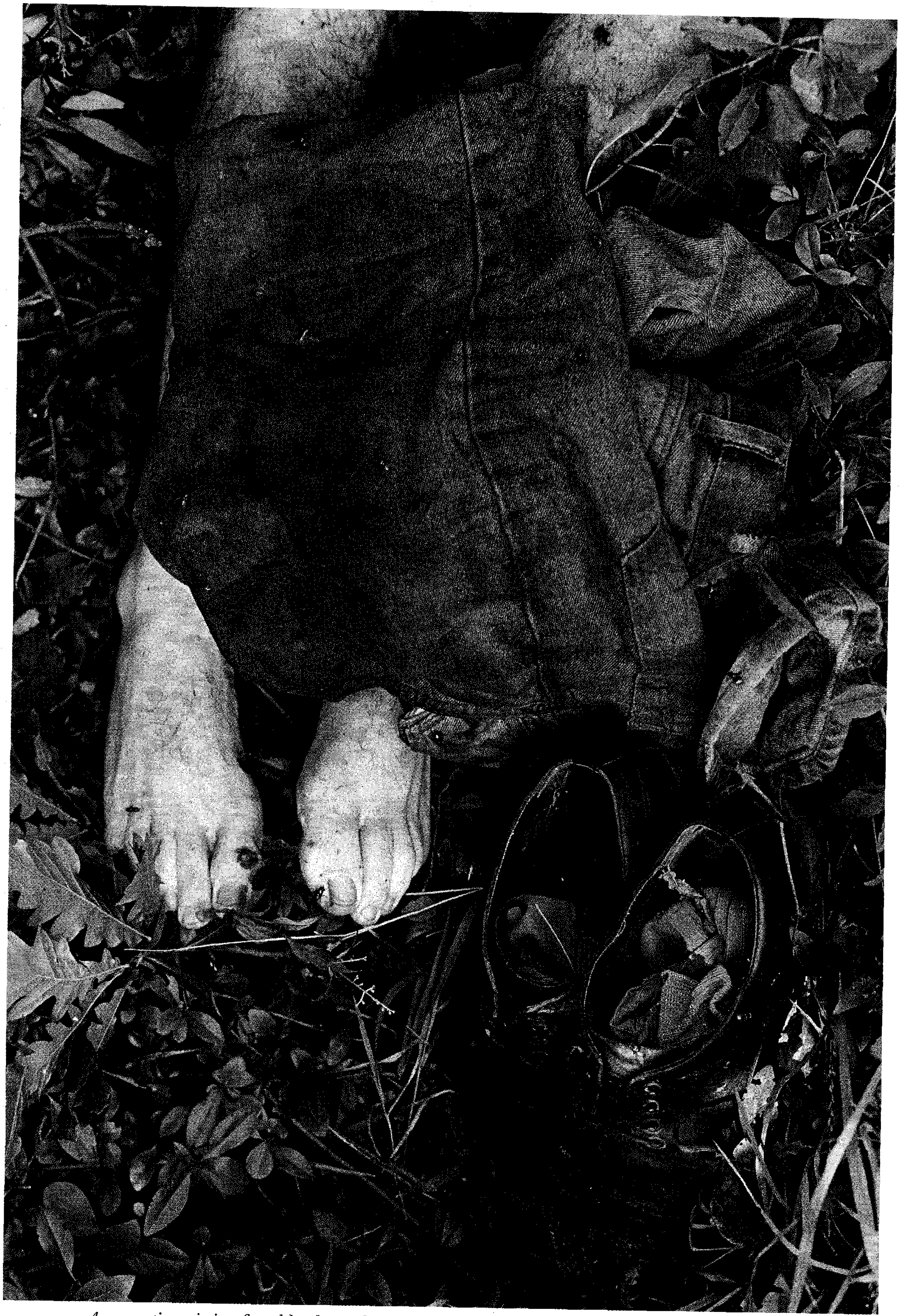
tended by fellow-refugees who do not know her name. Middle: Latrines; refugees on the road in Albania; and, after the return to
men after a shoot-out; crowds cheer a NATO *tank in Pristina, and Kosovar villagers near Prizren rebury a neighbor killed by Serbs.*



Upon returning to Kosovo, ethnic Albanian refugees often found that the towns and villages they had left behind



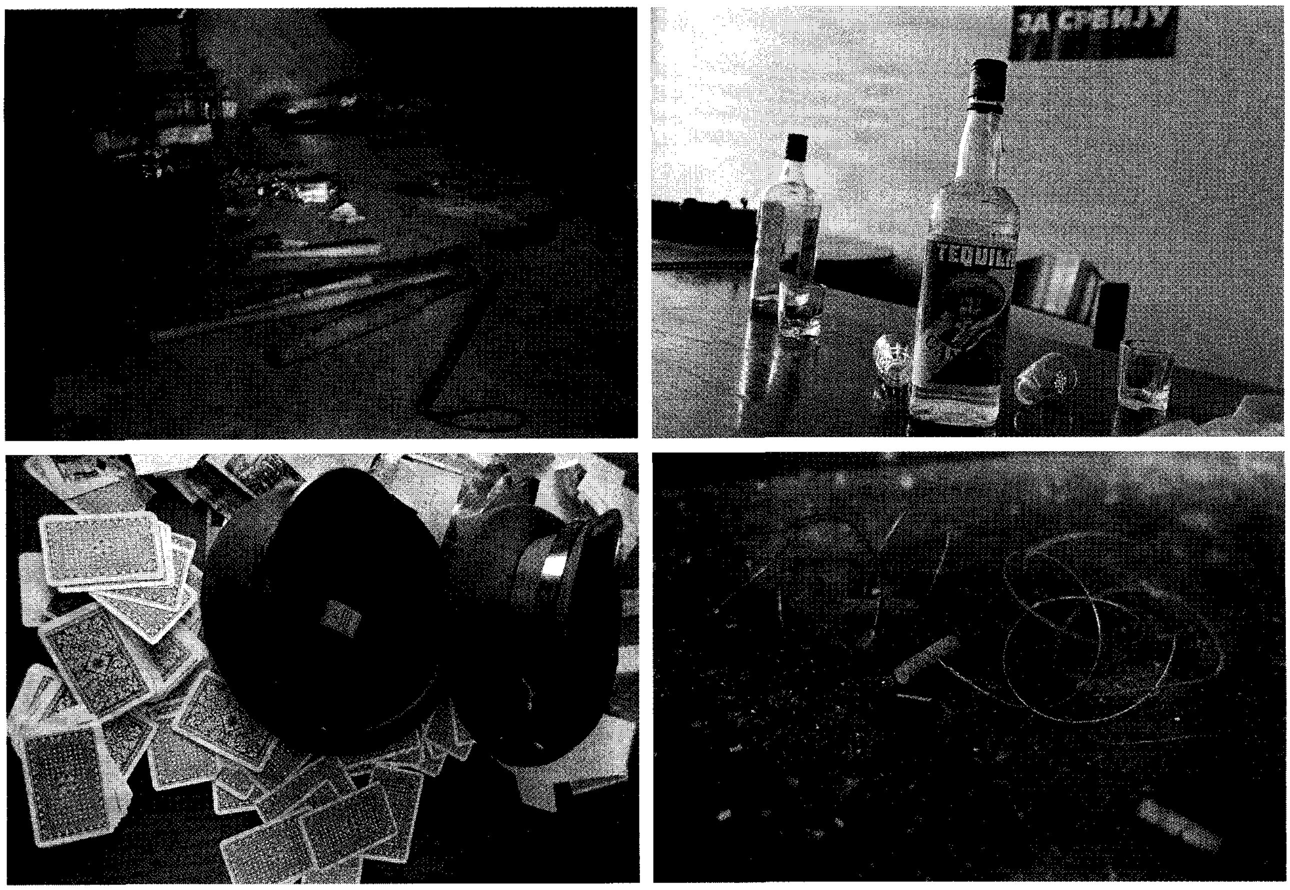
had been vandalized beyond recognition. A crossroads in downtown Djakovica after the Serbian withdrawal, in June.



An execution victim, found by the road near Xerxe, Kosovo, in mid-June, with his socks in his shoes.

United Nations, is a small place, not quite the size of Connecticut, but today it is the earth's biggest crime scene. As the Serbs prepared to yield the territory to NATO, they undertook a frantic effort to conceal the extent of their atrocities, packing the dead into mass graves, or torching them in the ruins of their homes. But the Serbian police headquarters in Pristina, from which much of the brutality was directed, appeared to have been hastily abandoned, with tools of torture, including a chain saw, left strewn about on the floor of an interrogation chamber. On one policeman's desk lay a notebook labelled with the word "Evidencija"; other desks were littered with playing cards and empty liquor bottles—evidence of the clubhouse atmosphere in which the torturers worked.

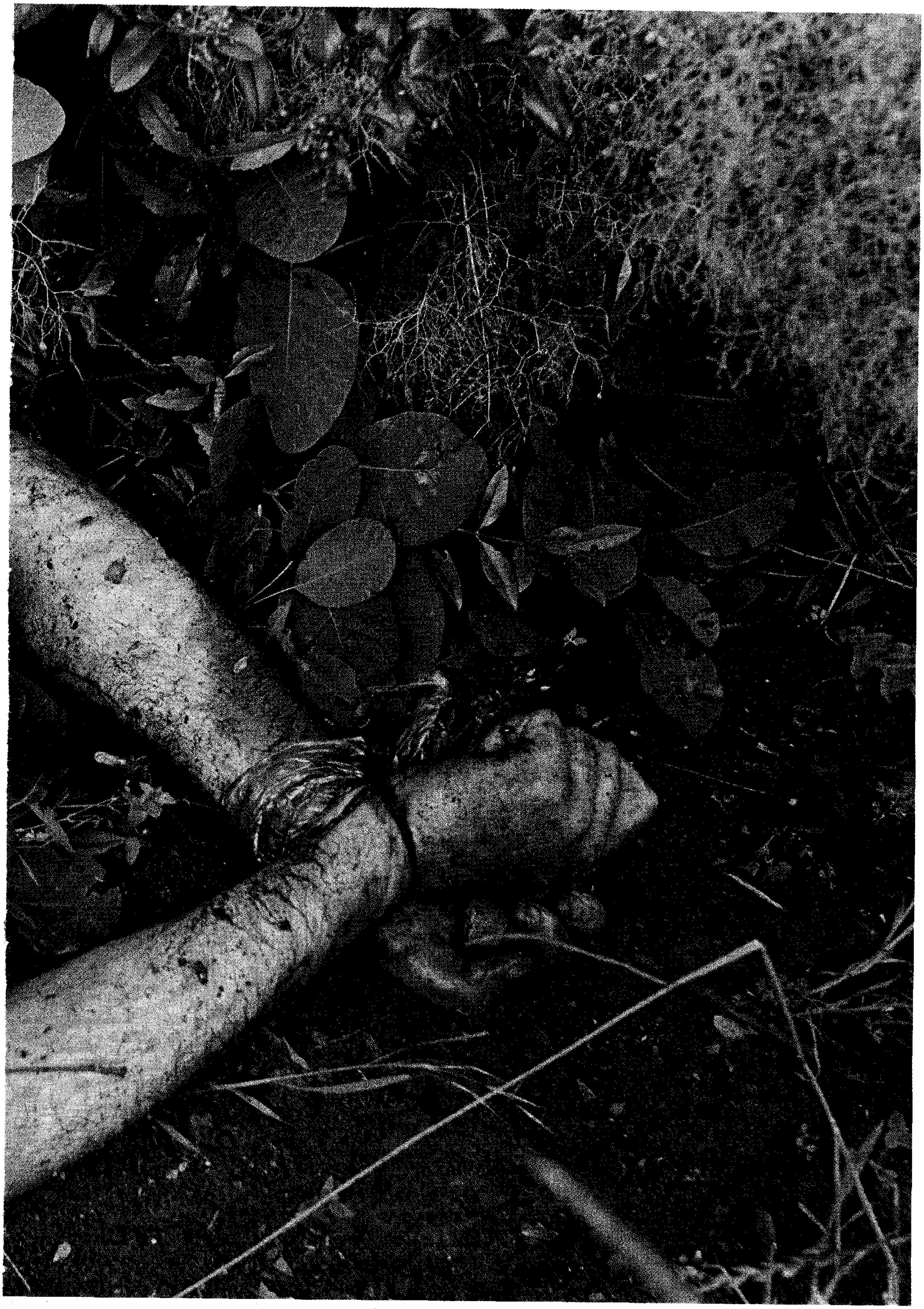
"In pursuit of his ideas of Serbian identity and happiness, Milosevic had developed one of the purest forms of evil, and in Kosovo, where the ethnic cleansing was planned and carried out in fantastic detail, his perversity found its ultimate expression," Peress said. For at least the first month of NATO'S bombing campaign, the possibility that Milosevic might triumph appeared terrifyingly real. "With the scattering of the people of Kosovo, there was a ripple effect, as if Milosevic had thrown a pebble into a pond, and we also—even here in New York—were scattered and in danger of losing the values of our culture," he went on. "Failure would have shown the total decadence of our society, and in the avoidance of failure we can now at least maintain hope for a better world. The previously undisputed right of a sovereign to kill or drive out his subjects is now at least in question."



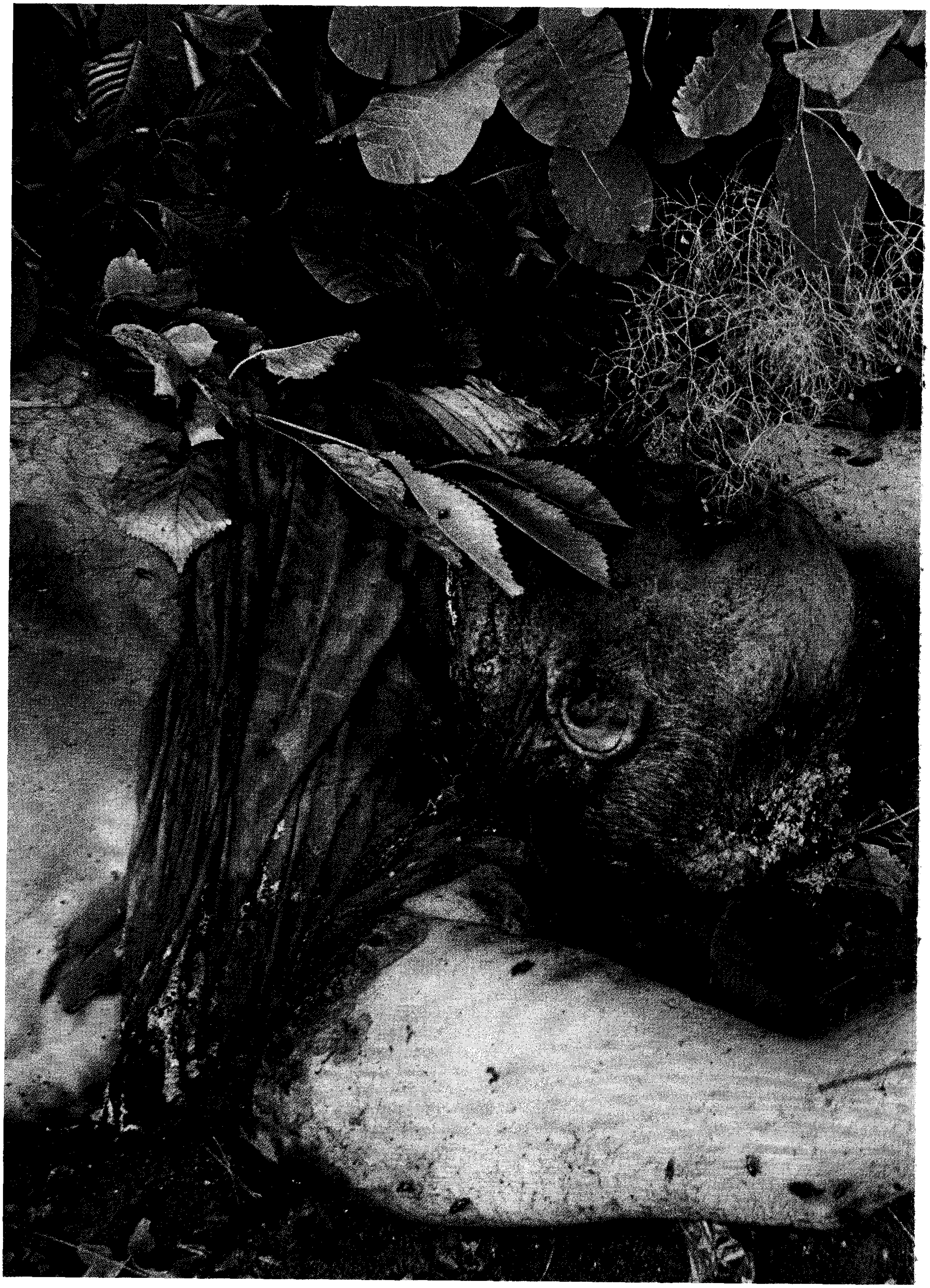
The Serbian police headquarters in Pristina served as both a torture center and a clubhouse for torturers. Clockwise from top left: bats, blades, and brass knuckles in an interrogation cell; the police chief's desk; wire garrotes; police caps and cards.

What does it mean for a people to endure what the Kosovars have endured? What does it mean for a people to have their homeland emptied, and turned into a wasteland? Peress said that "taking these pictures was a way to begin imagining what happened." Studying them also provokes wonder—at the tenderness that is expressed by these people in extremity, at the astonishing manpower that was required to achieve such destruction, and, of course, at all that remains unseen, and even unknowable. A dead man's pants lie folded over his bare shins, and his shoes are lined up beside his bare feet. He was executed, naked, with his hands tied over his head. Apparently, he was made to strip before he was killed. But look again at his shoes—how the socks are rolled up and neatly tucked into them. Was that the last thing this man did in his life? And, if so, did he know, or understand, that he wouldn't wear those socks again? Everyone in Kosovo now lives with such images and must try to understand our world by such questions—and so, as history slows down again, do we.

—Philip Gourevitch

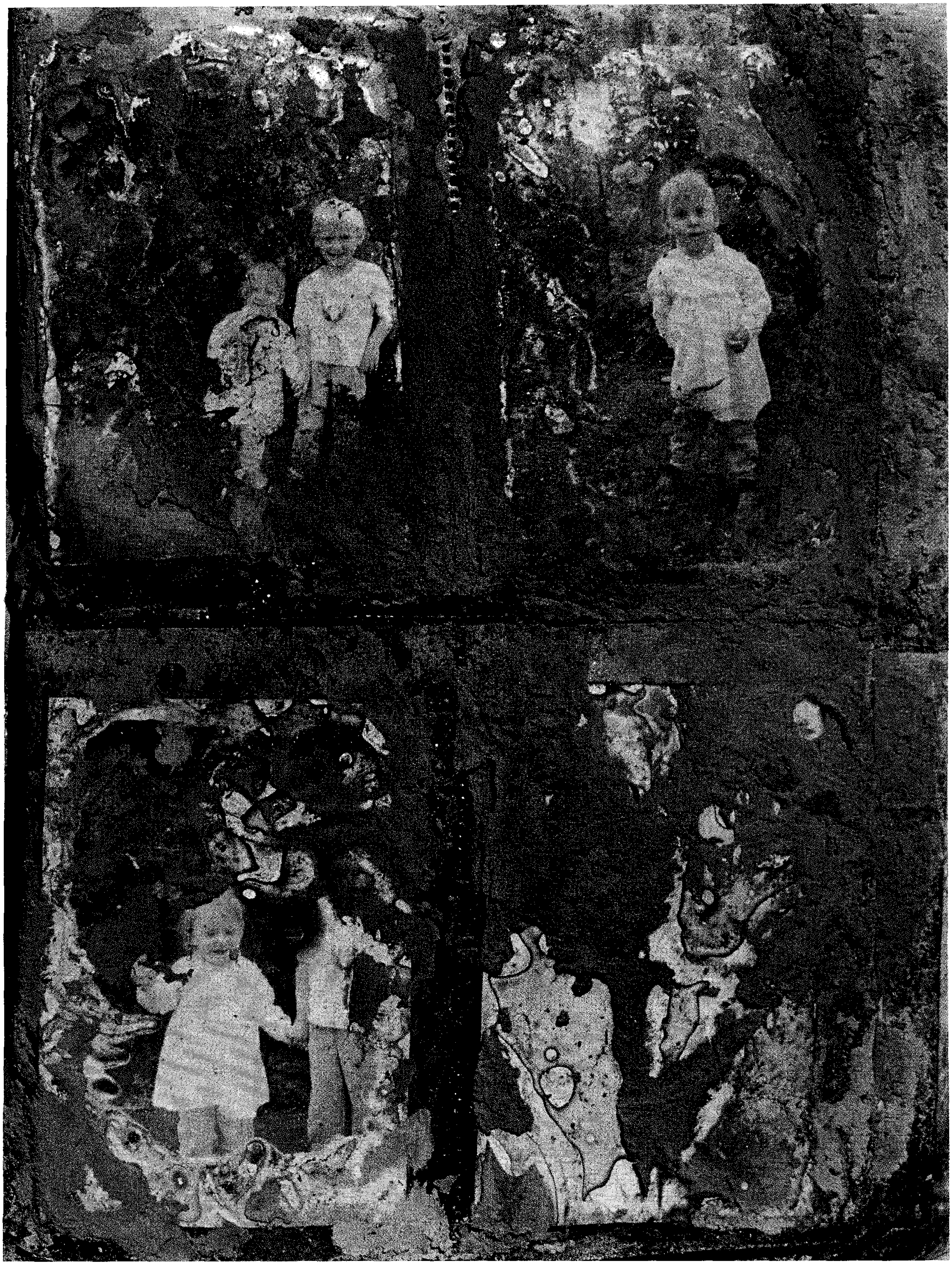


uld have been among the last victims of the Serbs or among the first victims of retribution by the Kosovo Liberation Army."



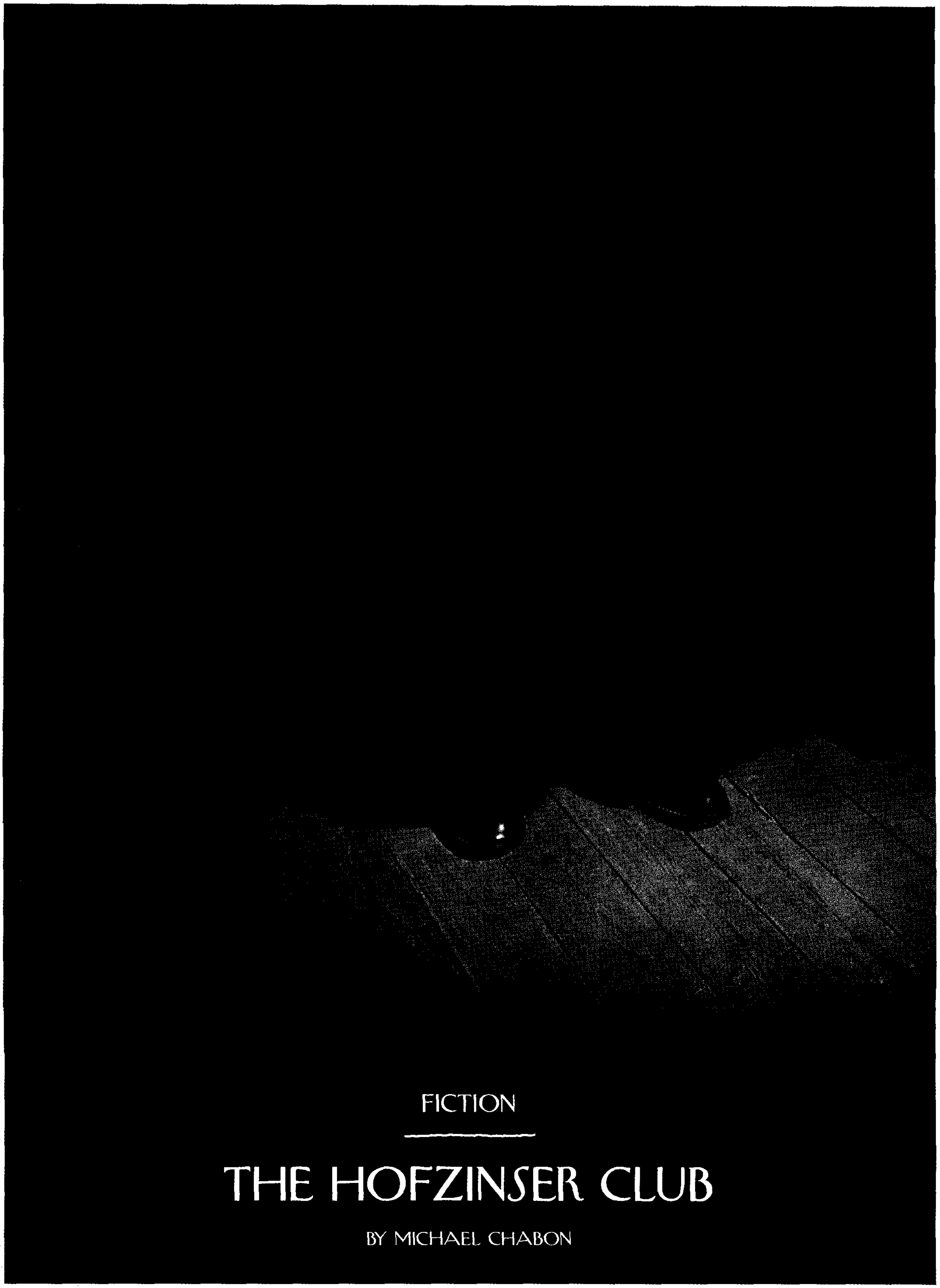
"That corpse on the road near Xerxe was at most a week old," the photographer says. "There were four bodies there. They c

In the village of Velika Krusa, a family photograph album, caked in mud, was found in late June amid a pile of luggage



ALL PHOTOS GILLES PERESS/MAGNUM

and clothing that had belonged to displaced Kosovar Albanians. Nearby, a mass grave held victims of Serbian "ethnic cleansing."



FICTION

THE HOFZINSER CLUB

BY MICHAEL CHABON

JOSEF KAVALIER'S determination to storm the exclusive Hofzinser Club of Prague took full form over breakfast one day in 1935, when he choked on a mouthful of omelette with apricot preserves. It was one of those rare mornings at the Kavalier flat—in a lacy, Secession-style building on a quiet square—when everyone sat down to breakfast together. Josef's father and mother, the two Doctors Kavalier, maintained full schedules and, like many busy parents, were inclined at once to neglect and to indulge their children. Herr Dr. Emil Kavalier was the author of "Grundsätze der Endokrinologie," a standard text, and the identifier of Kavalier's acromegaly; Frau Dr. Anna Kavalier was a neurologist by training, who had been analyzed by Alfred Adler and had since gone on to treat, on her paisley divan, numbers of Prague's young cathected women. That morning, when Josef, the elder son, suddenly hunched forward, eyes watering, scrabbling for his napkin, his father reached out from behind his *Tageblatt* and idly pounded him on the back. His mother, without looking up from the latest number of *Monatschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie*, reminded Josef, for the thousandth time, not to bolt his food. Only little Thomas noticed, in the instant before Josef brought the napkin to his lips, the glint of something foreign in his brother's mouth. Getting up from the table, he went around to Josef's place and stared at his brother. Ignoring him, Josef tipped another forkful of omelette into his mouth.

"What is it?" Thomas said.

"What is what?" said Josef. He was a pale, freckled boy, black-haired, handsome, with a large, squashed-looking nose and wide-set blue eyes. "Go away."

"Have you lost a filling, Josef?" asked Miss Horne, Thomas's governess.

"He has something in his mouth," said Thomas. "It's shiny."

Josef stuck two fingers between his right cheek and upper right gum and pulled out a flat strip of metal, notched at one end: a tiny fork, no longer than Thomas's pinky.

"What is that?" his mother asked.

Josef shrugged. "A torque wrench," he said.

"What else?" said his father. "Of course it's a torque wrench."

"Herr Kornblum said I should get used to it," Josef explained. "He said that when Houdini died he was found to have worn away two pockets in his cheeks."

Herr Dr. Kavalier returned to his *Tageblatt*. "An admirable aspiration," he said.

JOSEF had become interested in stage magic as soon as his hands grew large enough to handle a deck of playing cards. In Prague, a city of illusionists and sleight-of-hand artists, it was not difficult for a boy with indulgent parents to find competent instruction. He had studied for a year with a Czech named Bozic, who called himself Rango and specialized in card and coin manipulation, mentalism, and the picking of pockets. He could also cut a housefly in half with a thrown three of diamonds. Soon Josef had learned the Rain of Silver, the Dissolving Kreuzer, the Count Erno Pass, and rudiments of the Dead Grandfather, but when it was brought to the attention of Josef's parents that Rango had once been jailed, for replacing the jewelry and money borrowed from his audiences with paste and blank paper, the boy was removed from his tutelage.

The phantom aces and queens, showers of silver Kronen, and purloined wristwatches that were Rango's stock-in-trade had been fine for a boy's amusement. And for Josef the long hours spent standing in front of the lavatory mirror, practicing slips and sleights that made it possible to seem to hurl a coin into the right ear, through the brainpan, and out the left ear of a chum or a relative, or to pop the knave of hearts into the handkerchief of a pretty girl, required a masturbatory intensity of concentration that became almost more pleasurable than the trick itself. But then a patient of his father's supplied the name of an illusionist and escape artist named Bernard Kornblum, which was to change all this. Under Kornblum's tutelage, Josef began to learn the rigorous trade of the *Ausbrecher*, or escape artist, from the lips of one of its masters. At the age of fourteen, he determined to consecrate himself to a life of timely escape.

Kornblum was an Eastern Jew, bone thin, with a bushy red beard that he tied up in a black silk net before every performance. "It distracts them," he said, meaning his audiences, whom he viewed with the veteran performer's admixture of wonder and disdain. Kornblum's forehead was immense, his fingers long and dexterous, with knobby, inelegant joints, and his cheeks looked rubbed and peeling, as though chafed by polar winds. Although the Kavaliers were Jewish, Kornblum was among the first Eastern Jews whom Josef had encountered. There were Jewish refugees from Poland and Russia in his parents' circle, but these were suave, Europeanized doctors and musicians from large cities, who spoke French and German. Kornblum, whose German was awkward and Czech nonexistent, had been born in a shtetl outside Talinn and spent most of his life wandering the provinces of Imperial Russia, playing the odeons, barns, and market squares of a thousand small towns and villages. He wore suits of an outdated, pigeon-breasted, Valentino cut. Because his diet consisted in large part of tinned fish—anchovies, smelts, sardines, tunny—his breath often carried a rank marine tang. His Baltic smell, his shopworn good manners, his Yiddish made a strong impression on Josef.

Twice a week that spring and summer, Josef went to Kornblum's room, on the top floor of a sagging house in Maisel Street, in the Josefstadt, to be chained to the radiator or tied hand and foot with coils of thick hempen rope. Kornblum did not at first give him the slightest guidance on how to escape these constraints.

"You will pay attention," he said on the afternoon of Josef's first lesson as he shackled him to a bentwood chair. "I assure you of this. Also you will get used to the feeling of the chain. The chain is your silk pajamas now. It is your mother's loving arms."

Apart from the chair, an iron bedstead, a wardrobe, and a picture of Jerusalem on the east wall, the room was almost bare. The only beautiful object was a Chinese trunk carved from some kind of tropical wood, as red as raw liver, with thick brass hinges and a pair of fanciful brass locks in the form of stylized peacocks. The locks opened by a system of tiny levers and springs concealed in the jade eyespots of each peacock's tail feathers; you pushed the fourteen jade buttons in an order that seemed to change each time the magician opened the chest.

For the first few days, Kornblum showed Josef different kinds of locks

TEUN HOCKS, "UNTITLED" (1993)/P•P•O•W GALLERY

that he took, one by one, from the chest: locks used to secure manacles, mailboxes, and ladies' diaries; warded and pin-tumbler door locks; sturdy padlocks; and combination locks removed from safes and strongboxes. Wordlessly, he would take each of the locks apart, using only a screwdriver, and then reassemble them. Toward the end of the hour, still without freeing Josef, he talked about the fundamentals of breath control. At last, in the final minutes of the lesson, he would unchain his student, only to stuff him into a plain pine box. "If you are a claustrophobe," he explained the first time, "we must detect this now, and not when you lie in chains at the bottom of the Moldau, strapped inside a postman's bag, with your family and neighbors waiting for you to swim out."

At the start of the second month, Kornblum introduced the pick and the torque wrench, and set about applying these wonderful tools to each of the sample locks in the chest. His touch was deft and, though he was well past sixty, his hands steady. He would pick the locks, and then, for Josef's further edification, pick them again with the works exposed. The locks, whether new or antique, English, German, Chinese, or American, did not resist his tinkerings for more than a few seconds. He had in addition a small library of thick, dusty volumes, some of them imprinted with the seal of the Bolsheviks' dreaded Cheka, in which were listed, in infinite columns of minuscule type, the combination formulae for thousands of the combination locks manufactured in Europe since 1900.

For weeks, Josef pleaded with Kornblum to be allowed to handle a pick himself. Contrary to instructions, he had been working over the locks at home with a hatpin and a spoke from a bicycle wheel, with occasional success.

"Very well," said Kornblum at last. Handing Josef his pick and a torque wrench, he led him to the door of his room, in which he himself had installed a fine new Rätsel seven-pin lock. Then he unknotted his necktie and used it to blindfold Josef. "To see inside a lock you don't use your eyes," he said.

Josef knelt down in darkness and felt for the brass-plated knob. The doorknob was cold against his cheek. When at last Kornblum removed the blindfold and motioned for Josef to climb into his coffin, Josef had picked the Rätsel three times, the last in under ten minutes.

ON the day before Josef caused a disturbance at the breakfast table, he had held out his wrists to Kornblum, as usual, to be cuffed and bound, and was startled by a rare smile. Kornblum handed him a small black leather pouch. Unrolling it, Josef found that it contained the tiny wrench and a set of steel picks—some no longer than the wrench, some twice as long, with smooth wooden handles. None were thicker than a broom straw. Their tips had been cut and bent into all manner of cunning moons, diamonds, and tildes.

"I made these," said Kornblum. "They will be reliable."

"For me? For me to use?"

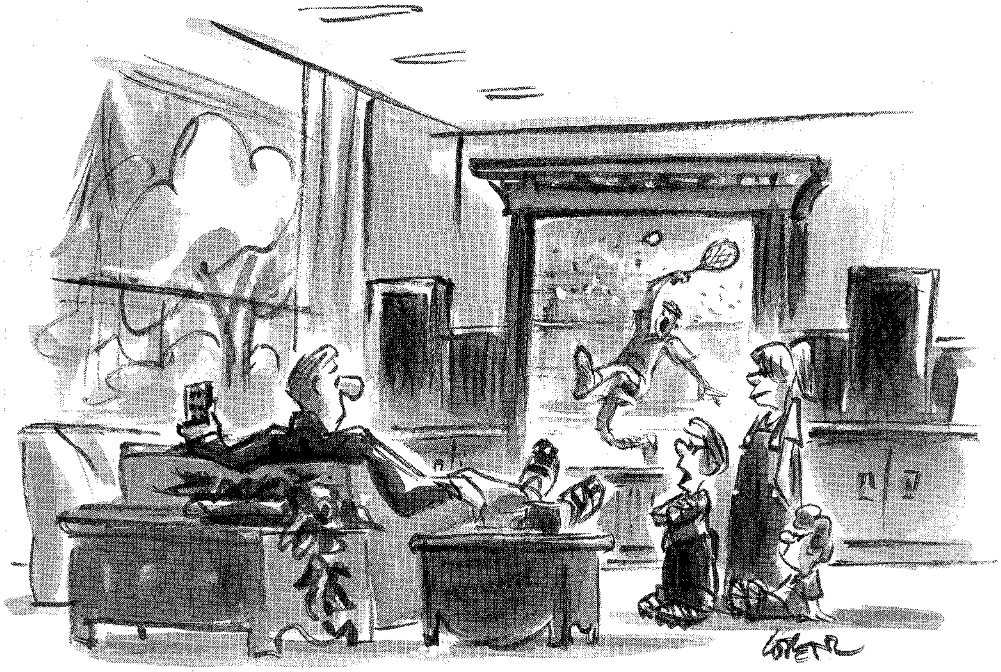
"This is what we will now determine," Kornblum said. He pointed to his bed, where he had laid out a pair of brand-new German handcuffs and his best American Yale locks. "Fix me to the chair."

Over the next two hours Kornblum allowed himself to be repeatedly bound to the legs of the chair with a length of heavy chain; other chains secured the chair to the radiator, and the radiator to his neck. His hands were cuffed—in front of his body, so that he could smoke. Without a word from Kornblum, Josef got the handcuffs and all but one of the locks off within fifteen minutes. But the last lock, a one-pound 1927 Yale Dreadnought, with sixteen pins and drivers, frustrated his efforts. Josef sweated and cursed under his breath, in Czech, so as not to offend his master. Kornblum lit another Sobranie.

"The pins have voices," he reminded Josef at last. "The pick is a tiny telephone wire. The tips of your fingers have ears."

Josef took another breath, slid a pick tipped with a small squiggle into the plug of the lock, and again applied the wrench. Quickly he stroked the pick back and forth across the pins, feeling each one give in its turn, gauging the resistance of the drivers and springs. Each lock had its own point of equilibrium between torque and friction. If you turned too hard, the plug would jam; too softly and the pins wouldn't catch properly. With sixteen pin columns, finding the point of equilibrium became a matter of intuition and style. Closing his eyes, Josef heard the wire of the pick humming in his fingertips.

With a satisfying metallic



"Eight years of unprecedented expansion, and yet the kid sector has failed to participate."

gurgle the lock sprang open. Kornblum nodded, stood up, stretched.

"You may keep the tools," he said.

THOMAS KAVALIER, Josef's younger brother, was an animated gnome of a boy, with thick black hair. When he was still very young, he had exhibited the musical chromosome of his mother's family and begun to regale dinner guests with stormy arias, sung in a complicated gibberish Italian. During a family holiday at Lugano, when he was ten, he was discovered to have acquired enough actual Italian from his perusal of favorite librettos to be able to converse with the hotel waiters. Constantly called upon to perform in his brother's productions, pose for his sketches, and vouch for his lies, he had developed a theatrical flair.

In tribute to Josef, Thomas held the memory of Houdini in great esteem. In a ruled school notebook he had recently written the first lines of the libretto for an opera, "Houdini," set in fabulous Chicago. He was hampered in this project by the fact that he had never seen an escape artist perform. In his imagination Houdini's deeds were far grander than anything that even the former Mr. Erich Weiss himself could have conceived: leaps in suits of armor from flaming airplanes over Africa, and escapes from hollow balls launched into sharks' dens by undersea cannons. The reality of Josef's homework, assigned by his escape instructor, Herr Kornblum—the endless tinkering with locks and knots that Thomas had covertly witnessed, night after night, in the faint lamplight of the bedroom the boys shared—was far less interesting to him than his brother's earlier interest in coin tricks and card magic had been.

Josef's sudden entrance at breakfast that morning into territory once occupied by Houdini marked a great day in Thomas's childhood. After their parents had left—the mother for her office on Národní Street, the father to catch a train for Brno, where he had been called in to consult on the mayor's giantess daughter—Thomas would not leave Josef alone about Houdini and his cheeks.

"Could he have fitted a two-koruna piece?" he wanted to know. He lay on his bed, watching as Josef returned the torque wrench to his special wallet.

"Yes, but why might he have wanted to?"

"What about a box of matches?"

"I suppose so."

"How would they have stayed dry?"

"Perhaps he wrapped them in oilcloth."

"What else does Herr Kornblum want you to put in there?"

"I'm learning to be an escape artist, not a valise," Josef said irritably.

"Are you going to get to do a real escape now?"

"I'm closer today than I was yesterday."

"And then you'll be able to join the Hofzinser Club?"

Josef rolled his eyes, sorry he had ever told Thomas about the Hofzinser. It was a private men's club, in one of the Old Town's back streets, that combined the functions of canteen, craft guild, and rehearsal hall for the performing magicians of Bohemia. Herr Kornblum took his evening meal there nearly every night, and Josef had begun to believe that it was a living repository for the accumulated magical lore of centuries. Josef wanted badly to be invited to join but had tried to keep such wishes to himself. Thomas, for his part, filled his own mind with Byzantine, houri-and-candied-figs-haunted visions of men in cutaway coats and pasha pants walking around in the Hofzinser with their upper torsos magically separated from their lower, while they summoned leopards and lyrebirds out of the air.

"When the time comes, I will receive my invitation," Josef said.

"But what if you did something really grand, to amaze them?" Thomas said. "We could throw you out of an airplane, tied to a chair, with the parachute tied to another chair, falling through the air. Like this." Thomas scrambled up from his bed and went over to his small desk, took out the blue notebook in which he had composed "Houdini," and opened it to a back page, where he had sketched the scene. Here was Houdini, in dinner jacket and parachute, hurtling downward from a crooked airplane, in company with two chairs, a table, and a tea set, all trailing scrawls of velocity. The magician had a smile on his face as he poured tea. He appeared to have all the time in the world.

"This is idiotic," Josef said. "What do I know about parachutes? Who's going to let me jump out of an airplane?"

Thomas blushed. "How childish of me," he said.

"Never mind," said Josef. He stood

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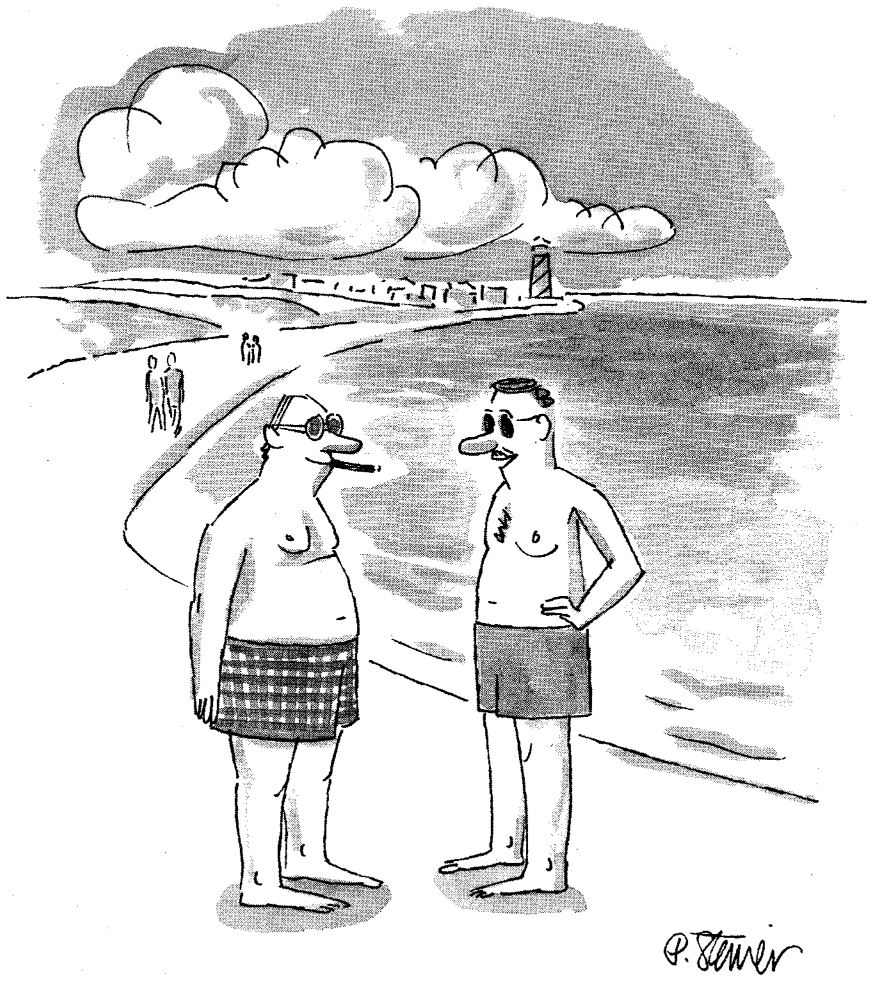


"Hey, great ab!"

• •

up. "Listen, weren't you playing with Papa's old things just now, his medical-school things?"

"Right here," Thomas said. He threw himself onto the floor and rolled under the bed. A moment later, a small wooden crate emerged, covered in dust-furred silk, its lid hinged on crooked loops of wire.

Josef knelt down on the floor and lifted the lid, revealing odd bits of apparatus and scientific supplies that had survived their father's medical education. Adrift in ancient excelsior were a broken Erlenmeyer flask, a pear-shaped glass tube with a penny-head stopper, a pair of crucible tongs, the leather-clad box that contained the remains of a portable Zeiss microscope.

"Wasn't there . . ." Josef dug deep into the rustling pile of shavings. "Didn't we used to have . . ."

"What?" Thomas slid out from under the bed.

Josef held up a long, glinting glass wand and brandished it, as Kornblum himself might have done.

"A thermometer," he said.

"What for? Whose temperature are you going to take?"

"The river's," Josef said.

At four o'clock on the morning of Friday, September 27, 1935, the temperature of the water of the River Vltava, black as a church bell and ringing against the stone embankment at the north end of Kampa Island, in the heart of Prague, stood at 12.2° on the Celsius scale. The night was moonless, and a fog lay over the river like an arras drawn across by a conjurer's hand. The Kavalier brothers had come prepared for cold weather. They were dressed in wool from head to toe, with two pairs of socks each. In the pack Josef wore on his back, he carried a piece of rope, a length of chain, the thermometer, half a veal sausage, a padlock, and a change of clothes for himself with two extra pairs of socks. He also carried a portable coal-oil brazier, borrowed from an alpinist school friend. Although he did not plan to spend much time in the water—no longer than a minute and twenty-seven seconds—he had been practicing for the past week in a bathtub filled with cold water, and he knew that even in the steam-heated comfort of the bathroom at home it took several minutes after each dip to rid oneself of chill.

In all his life, Thomas had never been up so early. He had never seen the streets of Prague so empty, the housefronts sunk in gloom like a row of lanterns with the wicks snuffed. The corners he knew, the shops, the carved lions on a balustrade that he passed daily on his way to school looked strange and momentous. Light spread in a feeble vapor from the street lamps, and the corners were flooded with shadow. He kept imagining that he would turn and see their father chasing after them, in his dressing gown and slippers. Josef walked quickly, and Thomas had to hurry to keep up with him. Cold air burned his cheeks. They stopped several times, to lurk in a doorway or take shelter behind the swelling fender of a parked Skoda. They passed the open side door of a bakery and Thomas was briefly overwhelmed by whiteness: a tiled white wall, a pale man dressed all in white, a cloud of flour hovering over a shining white mountain of dough. To Thomas's astonishment, it turned out that there were people about at this hour: cabdrivers, two drunken men singing, even a woman in a long black coat crossing the Charles Bridge.

He began to be sorry he had come along. He wished he had never given Josef the idea of proving his mettle to the members of the Hofzinser Club. It was not that he doubted his brother's ability. He was just afraid—of the night, of the shadows, of drunks and ladies in overcoats, and especially, on this morning, of the river, darker than anything else in Prague.

Josef, for his part, was afraid only of being stopped in this critical rehearsal. There could be nothing illegal, he reasoned, about tying yourself up in a laundry bag and then trying to swim out. He supposed he might be detained for swimming in the Vltava out of season, but he was on a tight schedule.

Yesterday he had mailed an invitation to the president of the Hofzinser Club:

> The honored members of the
> Hofzinser Club
> are cordially invited
> to witness another astounding feat of
> autoliberation
> by that prodigy of escapistry
> CAVALIERI
> at Charles Bridge
> Sunday, 29 September 1935
> at half past four in the morning.

He was pleased with the wording, but it left him only two days to get ready. For the past weeks he had been picking locks with his hands immersed in a sinkful of cold water, and wriggling free of his ropes and loosing his chains in the bathtub. Tonight he would perform the "feat of autoliberation" from the shore of Kampa. Then, two days later, if all went well, he would have Thomas push him over the railing of the Charles Bridge. He had no doubt that he would be able to pull off the trick. Holding his breath for a minute and a half posed no difficulty for him. Thanks to Kornblum's training, he could go for nearly twice that time without drawing a breath. Twelve degrees Celsius was colder than the water in the pipes at home, but, again, he was not planning to stay in it for long. A razor blade, for cutting the laundry sack, was safely concealed between layers of the sole of his left shoe, and Kornblum's torque wrench and a miniature pick were housed so comfortably in his cheeks that he was barely aware of them. Josef had made the pick himself from the wire bristle of a street-sweeper's push broom. Such considerations as the impact of his head on the water or on one of the stone piers of the bridge, his paralyzing sudden stagefright in front of that eminent audience, or helplessly sinking did not break in upon his idée fixe.

Josef knelt and held a match to the brazier, turned it on, and heard it come hissing to life. There was a comfort in its merry light. "I'm ready," he said. He stood up. "Help me into the bag."

He picked up the laundry sack they had pilfered from the housekeeper's closet, held it open, and stepped into its wide mouth as though into a pair of trousers. Then he took the length of chain Thomas offered him and wrapped it around his ankles three times, before linking the ends with a heavy Rätsel he had bought from an ironmonger. Now he held out his wrists to Thomas, who, as he had been instructed, bound them together with the rope and tied it tightly in a hitch and a pair of square knots. Josef crouched down, and Thomas cinched the sack closed over his head. "On Sunday, with the Hofzinser here, we'll have you put chains and locks on the cord," Josef said, his voice now muffled.

"But how will you get out?"

"They'll be just for effect. I'm not coming out that way." The bag suddenly ballooned, and Thomas took a step backward. Inside the sack, Josef was bent forward and reaching out with both arms, seeking the ground. The bag toppled over.

"What happened?"

"I'm fine. Roll me into the water."

Thomas looked at the misshapen bundle at his feet. It looked too small to contain his brother.

"No," he said, to his surprise.

"Thomas, please. You're my assistant."

"No, I'm not. I'm not even on the invitation."

"I'm sorry about that," said Josef. "I forgot." He waited. "Now roll me."

"The sack is too small. The chain will pull you down," Thomas said. He knelt down and started to uncinch the sack. "You have to come out."

Lying on his back, peering out through the suddenly reopened mouth of the sack, Josef shook his head. "Come on! Tie it back up."

"It's too scary," Thomas said.

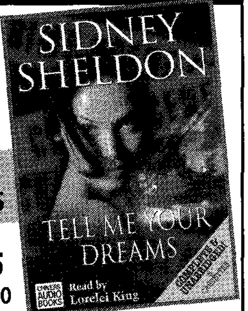
"What about the Hofzinser Club, eh? Don't you want me to take you to dinner there? Belly dancers. Turkish delight."

"Josef! Is your mouth bleeding?"

"God damn it, Thomas, tie up the God-damned sack!"

Thomas recoiled. Quickly he bent and cinched the sack, and rolled his brother into the river. The splash startled him and he burst into tears. An oval of ripples spread across the dark surface of the water. For a frantic instant Thomas paced back and forth on the embankment, still hearing the explosion of water. The cuffs of his trousers were drenched, and cold water seeped in around the sides of his shoes. He had thrown his own brother into the river, drowned him like a litter of kittens.

The next thing Thomas knew he was on the Charles Bridge, running past the bridge's statues, headed for home. But



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as he was passing St. Christopher he thought he heard something. He darted to the bridge parapet and looked over. He could just make out the faint glow of the brazier on the embankment. The surface of the river was unbroken.

Thomas ran to the stairway that led back to the island. As he passed the round bollard at the stairhead the slap of hard marble against his palm seemed to exhort him to brave the stony black water. He scrambled down the stone stairs two at a time, slid down the embankment, and fell headlong into the Vltava.

"Josef!" he called, just before his mouth filled with water.

All this while, Josef, blind, trussed, and stupid with cold, was madly holding his breath as, one by one, the elements of his trick went awry. When he held out his hands to Thomas he had crossed his wrists at the bony outer knobs, then flattened their soft inner sides together after he was tied, but the rope seemed to have contracted in the water, doing away with this half-inch of wriggling room, and, in a panic that he had never thought possible, he felt almost a full minute slip away before he could free his hands. This triumph calmed him somewhat. He fished the wrench and pick from his mouth and, holding them carefully, reached down through the darkness for the chain around his legs. Kornblum had warned him against the tight grip of the amateur picklock, and he was shocked when the wrench twisted like the stem of a watch and spun out of his fingers. He wasted fifteen seconds groping after it and then required another twenty or thirty to slip the pick into the lock. His fingertips were deadened by the cold, and only by some random vibration in the wire did he manage to hit the pins, set the drivers, and twist the plug of the lock. This same numbness helped him when, reaching for the razor in his shoe, he sliced open the tip of his right index finger. Though he could see nothing, he knew that the dark humming stuff around him now bore a thread of blood.

Kicking his feet in their heavy shoes and two pairs of socks, he burst to the surface. Three and a half minutes had gone by since he had tumbled into the river, and only Kornblum's exercises and a miracle of habit had kept him from exhaling the last atom of oxygen in his lungs. Gasping now, he clambered up the embankment and crawled on his hands and knees toward the brazier. The smell of coal oil was like the odor of hot bread, of warm summer pavement. He sucked up deep barrelfuls of air. The world seemed to pour into sight: spidery trees, fog, the flickering lamps strung along the bridge. Abruptly, he was sick, and spat up something bitter and shameful and hot. He wiped his lips with the sleeve of his wet wool shirt and felt a little better. Then he realized that his brother had disappeared. Shivering, he stood up, his clothes hanging heavy as chain mail, and saw Thomas, in the shadow of the bridge, chopping clumsily at the water, paddling, gasping, drowning.

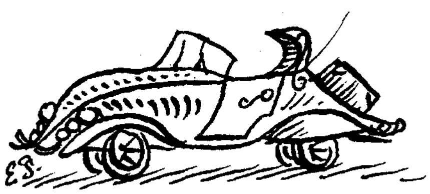
Josef went back in. The water was as cold as before but he did not feel it. As he swam he felt something fingering him, plucking at his legs, trying to snatch him under: the earth's gravity, or perhaps only the swift Vltava current.

When Thomas saw Josef splashing toward him he burst into tears.

"Keep crying," Josef said as he reached him. "That's good."

He got an arm around his brother's waist, and then tried to drag them—Thomas and his ponderous self—back toward the Kampa embankment. As they splashed and wrestled in the middle of the river, they kept talking, though neither could remember later what the subject of the discussion had been. Whatever it was, it struck them both afterward as having been something calm and leisurely, like the murmurs between them that sometimes preceded sleep. At a certain point, Josef realized that his limbs felt warm now, even hot, and that he was drowning. His last conscious perception was of Bernard Kornblum cutting through the water toward them, his bushy beard tied up in a hairnet.

JOSEF came to an hour later, in his bed at home. It took two more days for Thomas to revive, and for most of that time no one, least of all his doctor parents, expected that he would. He was never quite the same afterward. He could not bear cold weather, and he suffered from a lifelong snuffle. Also, perhaps because of damage to his ears, he lost his taste for music; the libretto for "Houdini" was abandoned.



The magic lessons were broken off—at the request of Bernard Kornblum. Throughout the difficult weeks that followed the escapade, Kornblum was a model of correctness and concern, bringing toys and games for Thomas, interceding on Josef's behalf with the Kavaliers, shouldering all the blame. The Doctors Kavalier believed their sons when they said that he had had nothing to do with the incident, but Kornblum told them that his time with Josef had come to an end. He had never had so gifted a student, but his own discipline—which was really an escape artist's sole possession—had not been passed along. He didn't tell them what he now privately believed: that Josef was one of those unlucky boys who become escape artists not to prove the superior machinery of their bodies against outlandish contrivances and the laws of physics but for dangerously metaphorical reasons. Such people feel imprisoned by invisible chains—walled in, sewn up in layers of batting. For them the final feat of autoliberation was all too foreseeable.

Two weeks later, when Thomas had recovered, Kornblum called at the flat to escort the brothers to dinner at the Hofzinser Club. It turned out to be a quite ordinary place, with a cramped, dimly lit dining room that smelled of liver and onions. There was a small library, with a few dozen moldering volumes on deception and forgery. In the lounge, an electric fire cast a neglible glow over scattered armchairs covered in worn velour, and a few potted palms and dusty rubber trees. An old waiter named Max made some ancient hard candies fall clumsily out of his handkerchief into Thomas's lap. The magicians, for their part, barely glanced up from their chessboards and silent rubbers of bridge. Their playing cards were devastated by years of crimps, breaks, and palmings at the hands of bygone cardsharps. Since neither Kornblum nor Josef possessed any conversational skills, it fell upon Thomas to carry the burden of talk at the table, which he dutifully did, until one of the members, an old necromancer dining alone at the next table, told him to shut up. At nine o'clock, Kornblum brought the boys home. ♦

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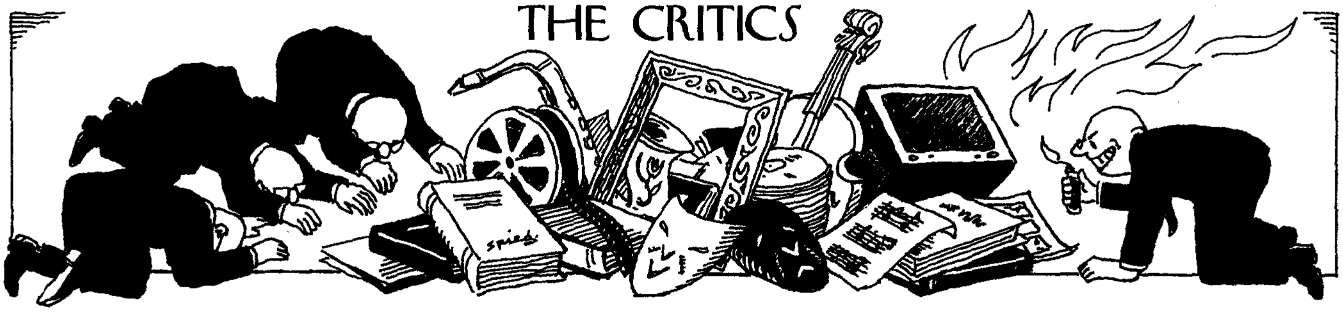


ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

MEASURING UP TO NATURE

David Smith at Storm King.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

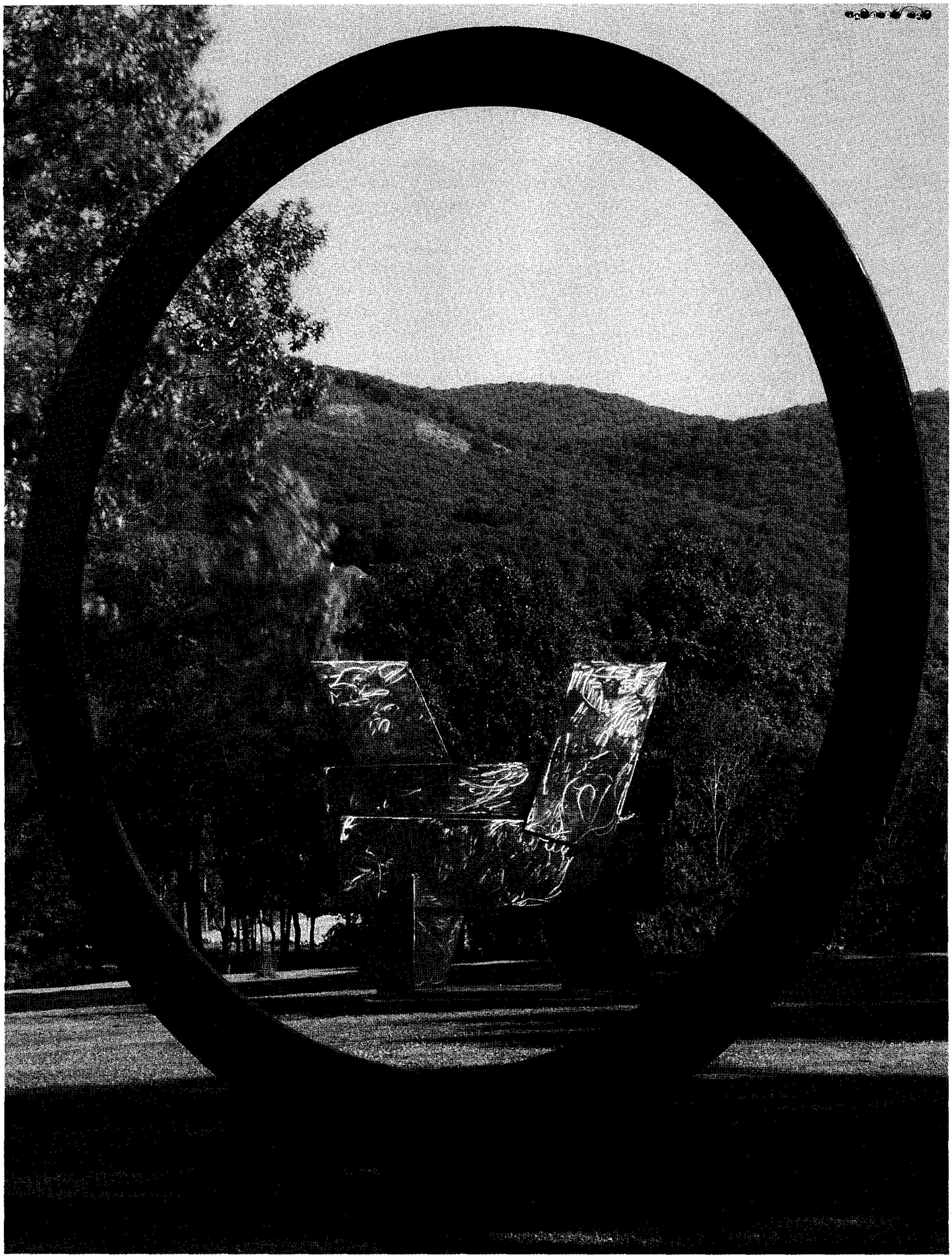
IT seems exactly right that the most comprehensive exhibition to date of David Smith's sculpture should be taking place fifty miles north of Manhattan, in the bucolic landscape of the Storm King Art Center. Smith himself skipped town in 1940, when he was thirty-four, and he spent the last two decades of his life in the Adirondack village of Bolton Landing, working like a draft horse, in a studio he had built out of cinder blocks and sheet steel, on the welded sculptures that established his reputation as the greatest American sculptor of the twentieth century. A lonely, difficult, fiercely determined man, Smith needed solitude and direct contact with nature. He wanted his sculptures to hold their own against nature, and so he placed them outdoors in the fields near his house, where he could study them in relation to each other and also to the trees, the mountains, and the sky. There were eighty-nine sculptures in his fields in May of 1965, when his truck overturned on a Vermont road and crushed him to death.

The Storm King exhibition, which is called "The Fields of David Smith," is a three-year, three-part marathon. It opened in 1997, with works showing the wide range of materials and forms Smith used: bronze, steel, stainless steel, silver, cast iron, and found objects, as well as oil paint, automobile enamel, gouache, paint sprays, watercolor, and Magna. Last year's show focussed on sculptures that referred to the human figure. The current, concluding installment, which runs through November 15th, puts the emphasis on Smith's later, more abstract works, many of which are in stainless steel. Although a number of rarely exhibited silver pieces are shown indoors, along with the drawings and paintings that remained an important adjunct to his sculpture, the great revelation is seeing so many major works outdoors, in groupings that approximate the way they looked at Bolton Landing.

The stainless-steel pieces were made for the open air. Smith polished and burnished them to reflect the sky, the clouds, and the surrounding greenery, and to change color in response to shifting light and weather conditions. He used the electric burnishing tool like a paintbrush, animating the surfaces with an abstract calligraphy of swirls and arcs that appear, in full sunlight, to swim around underneath the shiny exterior. At Storm King, there are eight sculptures from the Cubi series—probably Smith's best-known works, made of modular, boxlike, stainless-steel forms welded together into nine- or ten-foot-tall constructions so exquisitely balanced that they seem ready to levitate. Some of the non-Cubi stainless pieces are just as impressive, and in some cases more so: "Tower I," for example, a slender megalith that rises twenty-three feet above its narrow base, and "Sentinel V," an enigmatic personage whose geometric forms appear to measure and survey the landscape. "Becca" and "Untitled (Candida)," companion pieces named for Smith's two daughters, are done in the flat, two-dimensional format he adopted near the end of his life; viewed from the side, their massive, plated forms virtually disappear into light. Any of these works, seen in a museum or a gallery, would wipe out the competition. Outdoors and together, they generate the kind of wild, joyous excitement that you get from watching a great athlete surpass himself.

Candida Smith, the artist's younger daughter, who organized the exhibition in collaboration with the Storm King Art Center's director, David Collens, hopes to clear up what she feels are some misconceptions about her father's work. "For example," she told me, "the Art Gallery of Ontario has a piece called 'Untitled' that is very simple, a stainless-steel circle on a vertical support. It's shown against a wall, in a lovely gallery space, and people talk about early minimalism, but they're missing the point. That piece was made for our lower field, and what it is, quite clearly, is a lens to look through." At Storm King, the piece stands on the lawn near the main building, where it frames and concentrates the view of "Becca" and several other sculptures against a distant background of rolling hills. "The size of the circle is the size of his arm span," Ms. Smith said. "All his work is very personal that way."

Candida's parents divorced when she was a young child, and she and Rebecca, her older sister, moved with their mother to Washington, D.C., but they spent their summers and other vacation times at Bolton Landing, and they come back there now with their own children. Their father "made a lot of time for us," Candida remembers. "He always worked, but he included us in everything. We used to draw together, make sculpture together. Rebecca once



"Untitled" (1964) and, in the background, "Becca" (1965). Photograph by Robert Polidori.

made a horse out of notebook paper cut out and glued, and he was so impressed by it that he made an identical piece exactly to scale in silver, with a gold eye—it's in the exhibition. There is a striking relationship between that horse and 'Becca,' the big stainless-steel piece on the lawn, which is owned by the Metropolitan Museum. He was open to all sorts of ideas, including children's ideas. He was an artist in a very deep way—there wasn't anything he didn't do as an artist, parenting included."

David Smith had considered himself primarily a painter until 1933, when, after seeing photographs of Picasso's welded sculpture in an issue of *Cahiers d'Art*, he turned his prodigious energy to working out the implications of Picasso's discovery. Throughout his career, though, he continued to make quantities of drawings and paintings, and the current exhibition should confirm his standing as the most painterly of modern sculptors. ("I do not recognize the limits where painting ends and sculpture begins," he said.) Many of his sculptures are painted—about a third of the total œuvre, in fact. At Storm King, the painted works range from the rusty pink of "Study in Arcs," one of Smith's great drawings in space (as you walk around it, the abstract design snaps into place as a giant bird in flight), and the dappled brushmarks on "Dida's Circle on a Fungus" (orange and yellow on one side, blue, black, and red on the other), to the dazzling white elements in "Primo Piano II" and "Oval Node."

For many years, formalist critics didn't seem to know what to say about these painted surfaces. Rosalind Krauss wrote an authoritative book on Smith's sculpture, called "Terminal Iron Works," in which the issue of color was virtually ignored. After Smith's death, the critic Clement Greenberg, acting as executor of the estate, took it upon himself to have the white paint stripped from five Smith sculptures. This appalling act of curatorial high-handedness—Greenberg later claimed, unconvincingly, that the paint was "only a primer"—has been rectified by Smith's family, who now administer the estate, and who have had all five pieces repainted the way Smith left them. The white sculptures carve out a space of their own in nature, as opposed to the stainless-steel ones, which reflect and include their surroundings. Smith, who supported himself during the Second World War by working as a welder in a defense plant, said proudly that some of his painted pieces had "about twenty-five or thirty coats and that's about three times the paint coat on a Mercedes or about thirty times the paint coat on a Ford or Chevrolet. And if it doesn't get scratched or hammered I think the paint coat will last longer than I do."

Looking at his assembled work in this gorgeous setting, you can't help regretting that Smith's forms of romantic transcendence are no longer an option in art. Every contemporary sculptor owes him an enormous debt, but not one can claim his inclusive vision of a natural world in which man still plays the ancient, heroic role of sentinel-artist. "The sculpture work is a statement of my identity," he said. "It is part of my work stream, related to my past works, the three or four in process, and the work yet to come. In a sense it is never finished. Only the essence is stated, the key presented to the beholder for further travel."

From all accounts, he was not a happy man. Like most of the artists of his generation (the Pollock generation), he drank too much, and his turbulent nature helped to wreck his two marriages. Some of the artists who came to visit him at Bolton Landing saw the gentleness beneath the rough outer shell—Robert Motherwell once said that he was "as delicate as Vivaldi, and as strong as a Mack truck"—and they treasured his warmth, his cooking, and his highly sophisticated and allusive mind.

As for joie de vivre, most of that went into the work, and this was probably why he kept so much of it around him, in the fields of what he took to calling his "sculpture farm." Candida writes in the exhibition catalogue, "Gazing out at his fields, as he so often did, he found a kind of peace in the balance of the sculptures, which were like so many aspects of his identity. . . . He always said that for him, art was easier to do than life." ♦

THE THEATRE

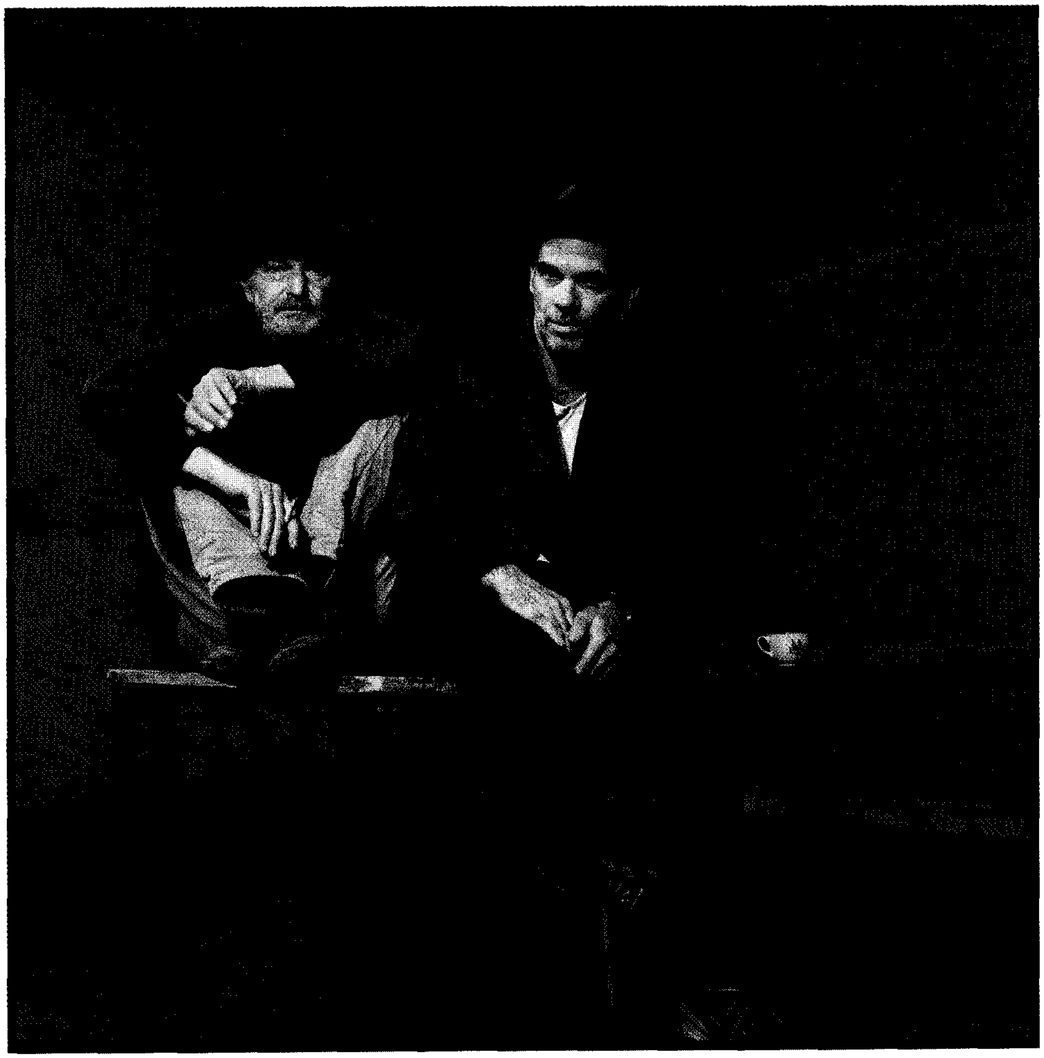
LAST ACT

The legendary Berliner Ensemble says goodbye to socialist zeal.

BY JOHN LAHR

One of the century's great theatre laboratories, the Berliner Ensemble, founded by Bertolt Brecht and Helene Weigel in 1949, is selling its franchise and closing up shop. The new management will keep the name but change the menu and the staff. Before the official handing over of the title, which will take place on August 1st, the Berliner Ensemble is for the first time bringing a production to America, finishing its long and distinguished producing career with Brecht's "The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui," a parable about Hitler as a Chicago gangster running a protection racket for the city's vegetable merchandisers. The group, whose work has been dedicated to making a new socialist order, will give its last performance in that sump of Western capitalism, Los Angeles, which Brecht called "the city of merchandisable dreams," and where he lived between 1941 and 1947 as a refugee from the Nazis. (He then decamped for Switzerland, after a cunning display of intellectual flimflammery before the House Un-American Activities Committee.)

I caught up with the production at Berkeley, just before its engagement at U.C.L.A.'s Freud Theatre. Here, steps away from the Sproul Plaza, where Mario Savio launched the Free Speech Movement in the early sixties, the bookish audience mooched around before the show listening to snippets from Hitler's speeches, delivered in an unemotive English by Christopher Peak. At first, it was hard to locate just where the rhetoric, with its invocation of "motherland" and "German blood," was coming from; then Peak's disembodied head and gray fedora were spotted atop the roof of Zellerbach Hall, where the play was being put on. The perspective had a nifty Brechtian touch: both the spell and the spellbinder had been placed in an ambiguous context so they could be coolly and properly judged.



Michael Gwisdek and Martin Wuttke in rehearsal for "Arturo Ui." Photograph by Ute Mahler.

OSTKREUZ

Brecht, who died in 1956, was one of the century's great contrarians as well as one of its great theatrical practitioners. "How can the theatre be both instructive and entertaining," he wrote. "How can it be divorced from spiritual dope traffic and turned from a home of illusions to a home of experiences?" To keep spectators from "losing themselves" in the story and to sharpen their critical powers, Brecht wanted his characters to be contradictory, his themes dialectical, his language and rhythm irregular. "The essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason," he wrote. Of course, his greatest plays—"Mother Courage," "Galileo," "The Threepenny Opera," "The Good Person of Setzuan"—defy this theory and also speak to the heart. When pressed for an example of his famous "alienation effect"—the ability to be at once inside and outside the role—Brecht invoked Charlie Chaplin. A great clown is always himself *and* his character; his high jinks keep the audience at once involved and at arm's length, which for Brecht was the ideal theatregoing state of mind.

"The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui"—which follows the arc of events from President Hindenburg's appointment of Hitler as Chancellor of the Reich to Hitler's execution of Austria's Chancellor Dollfuss and the subsequent invasion of that country—asks more to be admired as a spectacle than to be analyzed as a play. In Heiner Müller's production, which was first mounted in 1995 and has become one of the most successful in the Berliner Ensemble's history, the curtain comes up to the swelling sounds of Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde" and to the sight of the show's sensational star, Martin Wuttke, playing not Hitler, as he does later, but Hitler's German shepherd—a wonderful wiry, slavering beast with a red tongue, a whippet-thin white torso, and his master's sleek black hair. In a tense and menacing opening atmosphere, the panting dog is confronted by an image of decadence—a moll (Margarita Broich), nude under a fur coat, who sits smoking luxuriously atop a man on all fours. Behind them, the frozen engine of industry is visible, in a sculpture that reminds the audience of the Depression and of the stalled German economy.

"We shall be offering most of the audience a pure pantomime, a kind of silent film on the stage, for they know no German," Brecht wrote to his cast before the ensemble's London tour in 1956. The same is true now. Although it's impossible to miss Brecht's scenic genius, it's hard—even with English supertitles—for non-German-speaking audiences (myself included) to understand his stature as one of Germany's preëminent poets, and to grasp his uniquely charming combination of slang and sophistication. Here, his linguistic signature of vulgar elegance coalesces most palpably in the antics of Wuttke, who has the pudding face of Norman Wisdom and the kinetic surprise of Chaplin. As Ui, Wuttke is round-shouldered and ungainly, and Brecht has great fun showing how Ui's schlumpy, asexual bearing is transformed into the embodiment of a figurehead by a clapped-out Shakespearean actor. "Hold your head up! Let your toes touch the ground first," the actor (Michael Gwisdek) tells Ui, who proceeds hilariously to turn his shuffle into an *über*-silly walk.

In Act II, dressed in a tuxedo and top hat, Wuttke goes into Chaplin overdrive. Shouting at Dullfeet (Dollfuss) to stop publishing horror stories about him, he wobbles on his feet like a tempest-tossed tree. With his top hat covering his erection, he tells Betty, Dullfeet's busty, collaborating wife (the excellent Traute Hoess), "I am a man who knows no lust." No sooner has Ui murdered Dullfeet than he is laying siege to Betty. In an evocative stage picture of collusion, Ui steps on the train of her white dress as she sways away from him at a dramatic angle. Finally, Betty is raped by Ui across the figurative corpse of her husband, a wooden replica whose arm Ui keeps rearranging in a *Sieg heil!* salute. By the end, Ui has moved downstage to speak directly to us. He bleats about faith while his hands make the semaphore of a swastika.

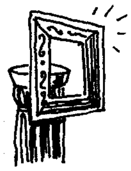
Except for Wuttke's performance, the three-hour production seemed sluggish. At the curtain, only a portion of the packed house stood to applaud the legendary company. And perhaps this isn't surprising. Since the formation of the Berliner Ensemble, the world Brecht was trying to remake has changed. The Berlin Wall is down; the Soviet Union has collapsed; the Marxist-Leninist principles that were the bulwark of Brecht's theatre are a thing more or less of the past. Every dogma has its day, and so does every drama company. There is honor, too, in knowing when to stop. ◆

THE ART WORLD

HIGH FOLDEROL

Gustave Moreau's fustiness suddenly looks smart.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL



The silly Symbolist Gustave Moreau, who is currently the subject of a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, feels contemporary again. Moreau, who died in 1898, at the age of seventy-two, gets revived fleetingly from time to time, usually by hypercultivated youths who have rediscovered aestheticism of the Aubrey Beardsleyan, wormwood-flavored kind and yearn to make of it something newly smart and menacing. Moreau is the perfect aesthete's mentor: a shaky artist but never a mediocre one. He was inchoate, rather, with talent, intelligence, and audacity, which jam up like too many people trying to go through a doorway at once. He had the precious minor gift of being able to inspire without intimidating. It made him a great teacher in indirect, practically self-sacrificial ways. His students included Henri Matisse, who plainly gleaned much about color from him, and Georges Rouault, who found uses for the Master's broody paint handling. Even now, tyro artists may raid the rich, messy pantry of Moreau's art, which is ungoverned by any consistent idea.

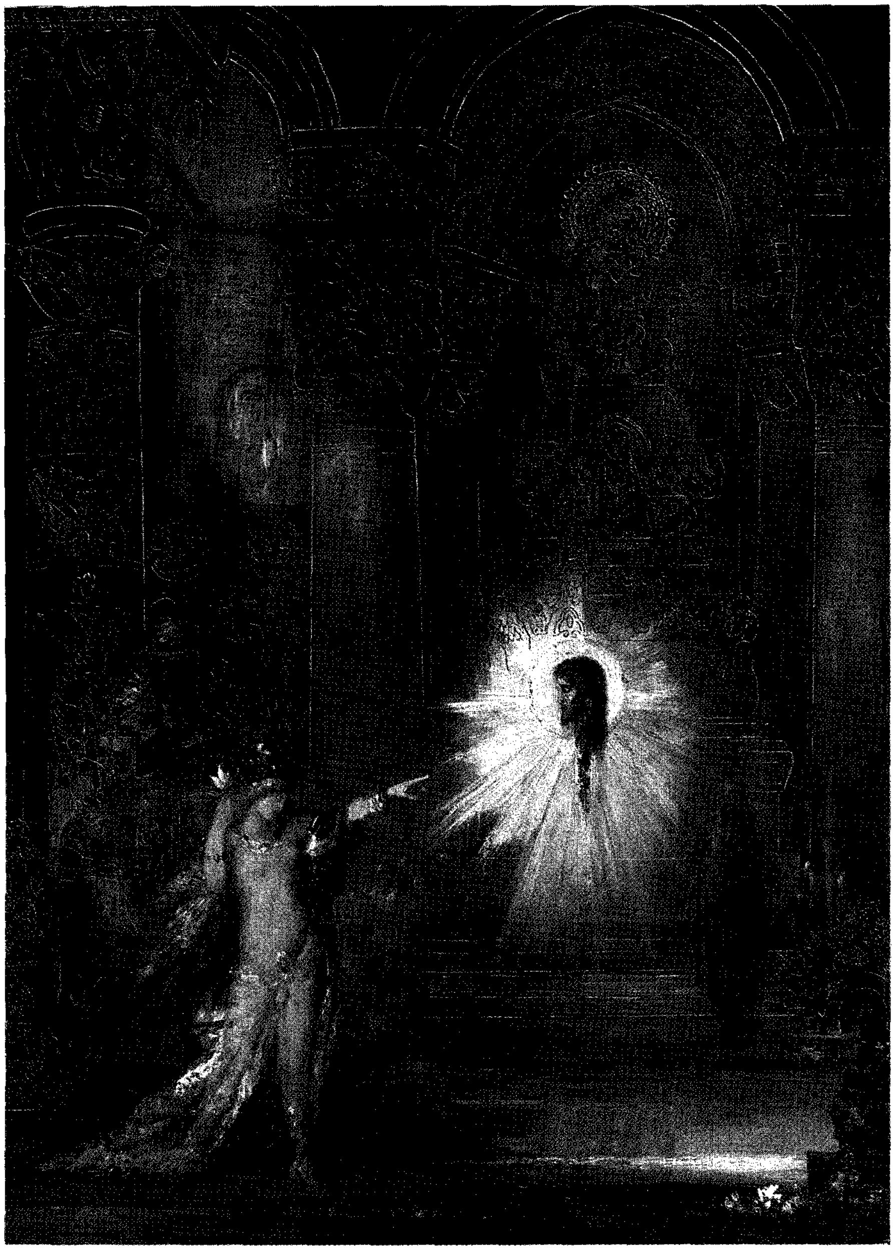
What Moreau was all about doesn't, on the face of it, make much sense. Born in 1826, the year after Jacques-Louis David died, he grew up hankering after the fading ideals of history painting—the officially sanctioned, high-minded pageantry of pumped-up pagan myths and Biblical stories, done in Renaissance-worshipful styles. He grew up wealthy, the rentier son of an architect and a mayor's daughter. He didn't need to rely on France's Salon-based system of career advancement, but he became a cynosure of the Salons and, though he was generously disposed toward some avant-gardists, a rote deplorer of Impressionism's bourgeois mundaneness. It's always hard for rich-kid painters to escape being dilettantes, because they are shielded from the real-life pressures of the art game. Moreau's work does often display a dilettantish muddle, notably in a tendency toward sensitive vacillation that hard-pressed professionals instinctively override. The muddle is the message, even. In a show that is described by its curator, Geneviève Lacambre, as "a selection of Moreau's most beautiful works," certain pictures are unfinished or are virtual scraps. The implication that we can judge beauty in the artist's stuff better than he could is dubiously condescending—and oddly cheering.

But Moreau had amazing drive—a palpable sense of mission. The enigma of his energy recommends him to us today, when our arts are, on the whole, drastically pepless. Millennium or no millennium, everybody knows that we are in transition from a former world, which bores us, to a coming one, which numbs us with uncertainty. Our predicament recalls that of the late nineteenth century, and we contemplate it now without relief from the old, edifying legends of the heroic modernizers who rode in and cleaned up the town. We have had it up to here with modernism and its strutting formulas. "Ornament is crime," the architect Adolf Loos actually said, early in this century, outlawing the bejewelling likes of Moreau. Ornament is not crime, O.K.? (Crime is crime.) Our present aesthetic insecurity forecloses cocky epigrams. Certainly we will have ornament, because we like it, but what to adorn and how—what types of pleasure to set above what other types—seems a matter of demoralized whim.

Gustave Moreau had a whim of spring steel, which he called "imagination." At issue then (as now) was a crisis of the aristocratic principle. The incorrigible human yearning to project some innate superiority onto somebody was subverted in the nineteenth century by industrialism and democracy. It holed up increasingly in the refuge of "art for art's sake." Moreau was a major prophet in the giddy movement of Symbolism. Symbolist vapors infused styles as mixed as the fussbudget atavism of the Pre-Raphaelites in England and the serpentine swank of Art Nouveau everywhere. Symbolism was more about attitude than method. From the Salon-wowing "Oedipus and the Sphinx," of 1864, through several conscientiously decadent visions of Salome's dance of the seven veils, Moreau's mature subject matter was mostly literary retread and exoticism à la mode. His test for imagination was not originality but intensity. He sent commonplace ideas screaming over the top with sensational textural

"THE APPARITION" (1874-76 AND 1897)/MUSÉE GUSTAVE MOREAU and color effects. His fabulous primary-secondary discords—for example, juxtaposing ruby red and emerald green—sandpaper the optic nerve. What is an aristocrat of the spirit? That's easy. The most overstimulated fellow in the room.

It remains hard not to laugh at Moreau's gaudy, heavy-breathing images, with their mortally Victorian-era blend of the crashingly conventional and the arbitrarily eccentric. Take "Oedipus and the Sphinx": the sternly confident O. meets the girlish gaze of a supposedly lethal adversary who—from the look of her dainty breasts and clumsy wings—might do poorly in a scrap with a puppy. Clinging to our hero, she happens to hide his manly member with a hind foot against an improbable fall of fabric. Details steal the show. An enamelled spear is so alluringly rendered that one is tempted to look for a price tag. The picture demonstrates the misery of hand-me-down literary content in art: the lazy assuming of dramatic points that beg to be made. Moreau figured—as cultural conservatives do—that certain subjects were intrinsically, inviolably grave under all circumstances. Such pious trust in icons of unearned dignity appears to latter-day eyes rather as Margaret Dumont always would to Groucho Marx: just asking for it.



Moreau's "The Apparition" at the Met: A moral seriousness about art as a sport that's played not for elegant fun but for bitter keeps.

At the same time, Moreau could be thrillingly wild in the psychology and the physiology of his art—those caressing, inflammatory colors and damp, yawning atmospheres. If he failed to make the modern grade, it was because he kept dissipating subjective passion in third-person platitudes. (A more advanced Symbolist, Odilon Redon, understood the need to imply a first-person point of view: something definitely extraordinary happening to someone possibly ordinary. This understanding would become a rule for modern art. Without it, abstraction is senseless, except in wallpaper.) Moreau's Salome certainly symbolizes something real in the male psyche—lust plus death—but the attendant subplotting about Herod, Herodias, and John the Baptist's noggin on a plate is folderol. The Salome pictures foreshadow a later, folderol-intensive wrinkle of sensibility: camp. Moreau doted on androgyny—he would derive the features of male characters from female models, for instance—only too ardently. The results keep smacking of Mardi Gras drag. And yet if there is an artistic offense afoot in Moreau's hoots it is surely just a failure of taste—a misdemeanor.

I am surprised to report that it is Moreau's moral seriousness, and not his gorgeous excess, that comes most alive for me at the Met. It is a seriousness about art for art's sake as a sport played not for elegant fun but for bitter keeps. You can feel it happening in works like the Met's Salome picture "The Apparition." Weird, hot gravitas crept up on the artist, apparently. It ambushed him. Experienced from start to finish, this retrospective reads like a fever chart that edges ever upward. Stiff, off-the-shelf thematics seethe, go supple, and start to writhe. Moreau couldn't and wouldn't abandon the academic ideals of standard, high-toned subject matter and spectacularly skilled execution: his terms of a rhetorical contract with an assumed audience. He kept the faith even as every possibility of an understanding audience fell apart around him, and he became a cult hero of twilight dandies and libertines. It's like watching someone who sets out to give a speech and ends up spewing Pentecostal glossolalia. And don't we pine for spiritual enthusiasm, in our present era, which is sick with speeches? Moreau draws strangely near to us at the close of a century that disowned him. ♦

TED RUSSELL

REPUTATIONS

CELESTIAL NAVIGATOR

Reading Randall Jarrell shows why criticism might matter.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

AFTER making a living as a writer for a decade, I first read Randall Jarrell and realized that he had already written everything I had intended to write, ten times better and forty years before. This shock of personal recognition—this sense that a writer you didn't know had done your writing for you, the feeling that his work as a critic and poet wasn't just yours but you, the you that you had always intended to be—has, in the thirty-four years since his death, affected a motley but passionate collection of writers and readers, from James Dickey to Brad Leithauser, who has put together a terrific selection of Jarrell's critical prose and miscellaneous journalism, called "No Other Book" (HarperCollins; $27.50). Leithauser's selection has been neatly twinned by the publisher with a memoir of Jarrell by his widow, Mary von Schrader Jarrell, "Remembering Randall" (HarperCollins; $22).

I mention the intensity of my own belated first experience of Jarrell because it suggests why reading him might matter to you, too. Though Jarrell thought of himself primarily as a poet, it is the criticism he wrote from 1940 until his death, in 1965, that the new collection celebrates, and even the most sympathetic reader is likely to resist the half-century-old views of still one more critic in love with the sound of his own crabby opinions, particularly when she has enough trouble keeping up with today's critics and all their crabby opinions. (Not to mention how much more she will resist being pressed to read another memoir of that damn *Partisan Review* "family," who by now must seem to her less Bloomsburyish than Addamsish—with Mary McCarthy as Morticia and Clement Greenberg as Uncle Fester and Norman Podhoretz as little Pugsley, throwing tacks and making trouble.) That would be too bad, though. Reading Jarrell is like listening to Bill Evans play the piano, like watching Fred Astaire dance. It doesn't merely show how well the thing can be done; it makes you remember why hands and feet were invented in the first place. Reading Jarrell, you don't feel, wearily, "Indeed, this is criticism worth bothering about" but "Oh—so this is why people bother with criticism."

Here is Jarrell on Kipling's prose, Auden's morals, and Pound's poetry:

> As everybody remembers, one of Goya's worst engravings has underneath it: *I saw it.* Some of Kipling has underneath: *It is there.* Since the world is a necessary agreement that it isn't there, the world answered: *it isn't*, and told Kipling what a wonderful imagination he had. Part of the time Kipling answered stubbornly, *I've been there* (*I am there* would have been even truer) and part of the time he showed the world what a wonderful imagination he had.
>
> The poet [Auden] is a man of the world, and his religion is of so high an order, his morality so decidedly a metamorality, that his poems are more a way of understanding everybody than of making specific demands on anybody. Auden, in most of this last book, lies back in himself as if he were an unmade bed, and every line in his sleepy, placid face seems to be saying: *"But whoever makes beds?"*
>
> A great deal of the book is interesting in the way an original soul's indiscriminate notes on books and people, countries and centuries, are interesting; all these fragmentary citations and allusions remind you that if you had read exactly the books Pound has read, known exactly the people Pound has known, and felt about it exactly as Pound had felt, you could understand the Cantos pretty well. Gertrude Stein was most unjust to Pound when she called that ecumenical alluder a village explainer: he can hardly even tell you anything (unless you know it already), much less explain it. He makes notes on the margins of the universe; to tell how just or unjust a note is you must know that portion of the text yourself.

Three things strike one about such passages: they are funny, they are true, and they sound American. They don't just make their points lightly. They make light of the enterprise of making points. Their humor is somehow nervous and modern. When Jarrell writes, "Poets are in the beginning hypotheses, in the middle facts, and in the end values," we recognize the familiar voice of mandarin wit. Max Beerbohm could have said that in 1900, Cyril Connolly in 1940. But when Auden turns on his tormentor and asks, "Whoever makes beds?" or when Kipling defies his doubters by actually using his imagination, we are in the presence of something new, of a wit that turns around to bite the plump tail of its own sapience. It is the combination of self-deprecation and self-confidence—of "Aw, shucks" and "Listen up!"—that makes Jarrell sound so American. Karl Shapiro said once that Jarrell was "the one poet of my generation who made an art of American speech as it is, who advanced beyond Frost in using not only a contemporary idiom . . . but the actual rhythms of our speech." And what was true of his poetry was even truer, or true for even longer, of his criticism. Jarrell's real subject, which unites the various sides of his work—criticism, poetry, children's books, his single, shining comic novel—was the American idiom, and it's the tone he refined from that idiom which will inspire you after his subjects are forgotten.

The personal effect that Jarrell achieves must come from his music, rather than from his legend, because he doesn't really have a legend. Until his tragic last two years, when he fell into a depression, slashed his wrist after getting an evil review in the *Times*, and then was hit by a car that he either was or was not trying to avoid, his life was mostly uneventful. With Richard Wilbur, he helped set the dignified style for a poet's life in America, postwar (and post-poetry): liberal-arts colleges, reading tours for book clubs, that job at the Library of Congress, criticism for the quarterlies, sprightly yet instructive articles for the popular magazines. (A couple of his best things appeared in *Mademoiselle*.) He never wrote a memoir, and his poems, even his last, heartbreaking ones, are dramatic monologues cast in somebody else's voice. Unlike his friend and contemporary James Agee, another Southern poet-comedian come North (and another one-famous-novel and miscellaneous-journalism man), Jarrell in his writing is never personal or confessional. He is informal but not confiding, and the voice in that one novel, "Pictures from an Institution," is godlike and amused. If the wound in Agee's life, to which he always returned, was his father's early death, the childhood wound in Jarrell's was so small that it could be treated only comically: at the age of twelve, he spent a happy summer in Los Angeles, and then he had to go home. His biographer of a few years back, William H. Pritchard, who admired him no end, seems to have found him remote, and wrote a disappointingly abstract life. Maybe it's just that Jarrell is of a piece. Where his hero, Auden, comes, like Elvis, in two flavors, early and late (in both cases, the young ones have the hips and the voice, the old ones the gut and the soul), Jarrell, like Astaire, just gets balder and better.

The question one wants to ask about such a man is not "How did he live?" but "Was he as happy as he sounds?" The tone is so wry, confident, worldly, and right that one feels he must have been miserable if he needed to produce it. The answer, arising from his wife's memoir and from his work, is, well, yes and no. Few memoirs can have held so much joy recalled in detail as Mary Jarrell's. On the other hand, he ended sadly, and

Randall and Mary Jarrell in Chevy Chase, Maryland, in July, 1957: They made a closed, insular world.

the sadness can't be left entirely alone.

Randall Jarrell was born in Nashville to an old Southern family (on his mother's side) in 1914. As an adolescent, he sat for one of the perfect Greek types on the bizarre reproduction of the Parthenon they've got down there. He spent that one summer in L.A. in the twenties, with his father's family; but the tacky monuments of twenties Los Angeles—the tar pits and the parks and the blinding light in the studios—stayed with him permanently, as of an American happiness more sunlit than the one he knew at home.

He was precocious, and by the time he went off to Vanderbilt he had the poise and sense of self of a mature poet. He was taken up as an undergraduate by a couple of powerful if improbable protectors, the Southern-agrarian poets Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom, at a time when they were at the height of their reputations. They had good and uncompromising taste, and they got him "modernized," reading Eliot and Yeats. (Auden, his most important influence, he discovered on his own.) They also gave him an appetite, which he was a long time growing out of, for the more humid kind of Southern rhetoric. His early poetry, startlingly, was almost pure fustian, yard goods of hot air.

Odd mentors for a funny guy. But there was a lot of loose rhetorical energy lying around in the thirties, and anyone who could blow got a reputation. Jarrell at the beginning was, again like Auden, a genuinely smart and sensible fellow, and he was amazed at the reputation you could earn just by making sounds. There are certain runs of words that are so in keeping with the feeling of the time that they make poetry without any effort; it is as hard for us to understand why people's pulses quickened when they read "A shoe that I forgot to tie/ Vexes me, and here I sit / Staring at it" as it will be for our grandkids to understand why our pulses quickened when we heard "The pump don't work cause the vandals took the handles."

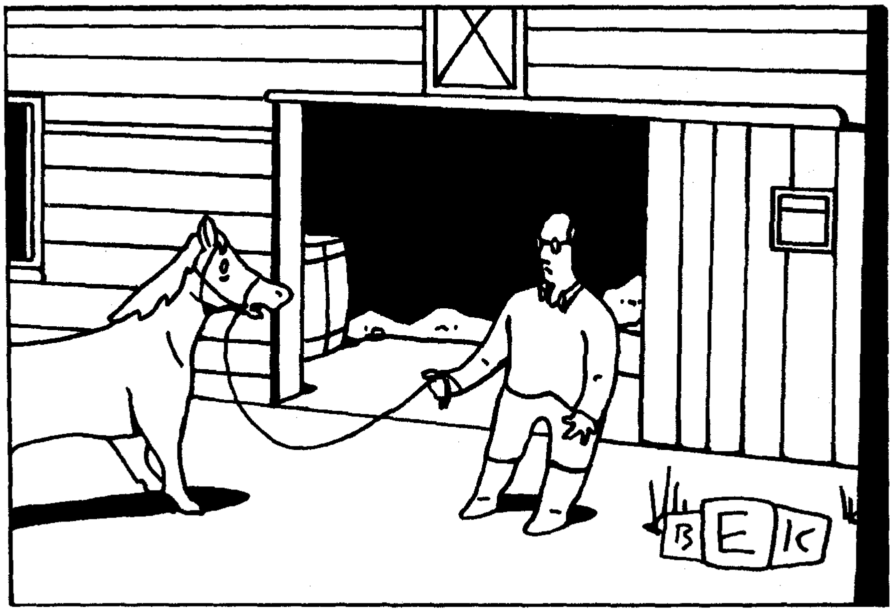
He went to Kenyon College, and had his next scarifying experience: rooming with Robert Lowell. Certain poets and writers are lucky to know each other, willy-nilly, early on: they can respect each other's commitment before they have a chance to doubt each other's style. Jarrell would never have appreciated Lowell as intently as he did had he not known him firsthand. Lowell was out to startle—"More than any other poet, Robert Lowell is the poet of shock," Jarrell wrote—while he himself was essentially a sentimental classicist.

Then the war came, and it gave Jarrell something not to be rhetorical about. The experience of war for him was the experience not of battle but of the Army. (He chose a specialty any poet would have dreamed of, becoming a celestial navigator for the Army Air Forces.) It's an endlessly repeated truth that the great difference between generations lies in the experience of the war; Jarrell's case proves that the experience didn't have to be scary or even particularly violent to be effective. What he learned in the Army was how to endure tedium and the arbitrariness of authority. It was a kind of graduate seminar; anyone who came out of it had a sense of how absurd and ungrounded authority had to be, and knew to just take it when it came to him, the way Jarrell did as a critic. In the Army he also learned that his countrymen, though utterly, deeply unaware that poetry existed at all, were poetic just the same. This had a humanizing effect. It taught him irony and patience, and how to listen. The real world crept into his poems. He heard so many voices that were not poetic that they became another kind of poetry. His poetry became inhabited by small-time G.I.s, most memorably the dying ball-turret gunner in his most famous poem.

At the end of the war, with the fires at Auschwitz just out, he discovered nineteenth-century German culture and fell in love with it. Hannah Arendt became his instructor; it was part of her function to sustain German culture for Americans who had come to doubt it. You could learn the lesson, as the little boy says in Lewis Carroll, only by twiddling your eyes when you come to the difficult bits. ("And then what did Mr. Heidegger do in the war, Hannah?") Jarrell took it not because he was indifferent to the facts of what had happened—his poem "Protocols" is a quiet duologue by two children of the Holocaust—but, in the ruthless way that is right for poets, because the Germanic cult supplied a cool, mysterious, leafy mythology at a time when the old classical properties belonged to the middlebrows. Not so oddly, his infatuation with nineteenth-century German romanticism—with the Grimms and Goethe, particularly—was fulfilled only twenty years later, when he began to write children's books.

The Germanisms, plus the residual Southern bloom, cast a haze over his poems of the forties and fifties. The mythologies are so dense, the references so compacted, and the identities of the voices so elusive that it's often hard for even a sympathetic reader to figure out who is talking and what the hell he is trying to say. Only in the poetry reviewing that he began to do in the late forties did the Jarrell voice emerge; as early as 1941 he could write, of college criticism, "Our universities should produce good criticism; they do not—or, at best, they do so only as our prisons produce counterfeit money: a few hardened prisoners are more or less surreptitiously continuing their real vocations."

When we read Jarrell's reviewing today, it's the fun of it—combined with his gift for feeling his way across a poem's surface like a man up on a ledge in a silent comedy, clinging to the wall of a corniced skyscraper—that makes him so irresistible. He once said everything there was to say about early and late Yeats by juxtaposing a list of the forty-six words that occur most



"Oh, I was looking for something with a little more hay."

frequently in Yeats's early poems with the sixty-eight that occur most frequently in his late poems. But he earned a reputation as a killer critic, shooting down other poets on their way up, and stored up a savings account of enemies that he would draw on until he died. (Eleanor Ross Taylor at his death referred darkly to "certain worldly honors appropriate to him that he never got," though one wonders what "worldly honors" American poets ever do get.)

Jarrell looks sweeter now than he did then. Some of this changing perception is due simply to the passage of time, which turns hopeful minor poets into humorous minor characters. When Jarrell writes of two forgotten poets that "Mr. Bacon and Mr. Bynner are traditional in the sense that your appendix is traditional: they are the remains of something necessary under no longer existing conditions," we exult, but then Mr. Bacon and Mr. Bynner are not our friends, or us. Jarrell also earned the special enmity that funny critics provoke. A critic who tries to be funny runs the risk of being taken *too* seriously, in the sense that people are enraged by what he intends to be hypothetical and lighthearted. Jarrell is funniest about the poets he likes most—Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Frost—even when, as with Frost, there is nothing particularly funny about them. Reading great poetry put him in a good mood.

Yet any good joke is a comparison of unlike things and provides a sense of proportion even in praise. If you say, as Jarrell once did, that another poet's inventions remind you of the Li'l Abner comic strip, you might mean it as a real compliment, but it will be taken as one wisecrack too many. When Jarrell writes of Stephen Spender, in a review on the whole not unkind, that "when the muse first came to Mr. Spender he looked so sincere that her heart failed her, and she said, 'Ask anything and I will give it to you,' and he said: 'Make me sincere,' " you can see why this might have been far more enraging to Spender than a review that was openly hostile. This happened to Jarrell a lot.

IN 1951, Jarrell met Mary von Schrader, who, though she was born in St. Louis and grew up in California, where she got a degree in philosophy from Stanford, had an appealing air of the Germanic clinging to her—she came from a German family—and two lovely daughters by a previous marriage, whom Jarrell could befriend without quite having to parent. They fell for each other hard, and created a "group of two," an enclosed, insular world. Mary Jarrell's book is diffuse and occasionally difficult to follow—you read for a long time before you figure out where he came from, what school he taught at, and what her name was—but the strings of associations give her memoir an ecstatic, exclamatory quality that will make it an enduring book. More than any other memoir of an artist I know, this one rings with the convincing sound of remembered happiness. It is, touchingly and rightly, filled with things—products and clothes—for it is things that are the receptacles of joy, what we pour it into: Jarrell's favorite stereo speakers (KLH), his favorite records (by Richter and the Budapest Quartet), his choices on Savile Row ("We browsed among the bolts of broadcloth, tweed, twill. . . . One pale, almost rainbow-hued check kept drawing Randall back. Of course it was too *jeune fille* for a jacket, he said, and too overwhelming for a suit, and yet . . . and yet . . . When I suggested a topcoat, Randall burst out, 'A topcoat! A summer overcoat! I'll be like someone in a Russian novel' "). Even the clothes he was wearing when he was hit by that car are gently catalogued ("his dark Savile Row Shetland jacket, a dark tweed cap, and his dark Italian leather driving gloves"). Phrases and places and products tumble together in a moving evocation of a happy time: "Many afternoons, after I picked up Randall at the Library, we put the top down on the Mercedes and headed for Howard-Johnson-on-Wisconsin for takeout milkshakes and to ride around in the spring."

The fifties, despite their uptight reputation, emerge in the memoir as a far looser era for poets than any that has come after: milkshakes and the Mercedes and "Faust," the Redskins and Mahler and Ingmar Bergman and Johnny Unitas all come breezing by to the sound of the Budapest Quartet playing Mozart, without an ingratiating cringe either at Western civilization or at the local cultural-studies program. (Jarrell called one of his collections of essays "A Sad Heart at the Supermarket." Nowadays, the real sad hearts are off by themselves at Sam's Club, while the poets are driving five miles to the nearest college town for focaccia and Barolo. The poets might not be so sad, but they are not at the supermarket, either.) Jarrell was a big Redskins and then a big Colts fan, and wrote a poem about Big Daddy Lipscomb, the great doomed, drug-addicted defensive tackle. Yet he is not showing off his ability to allude to popular culture. He is just

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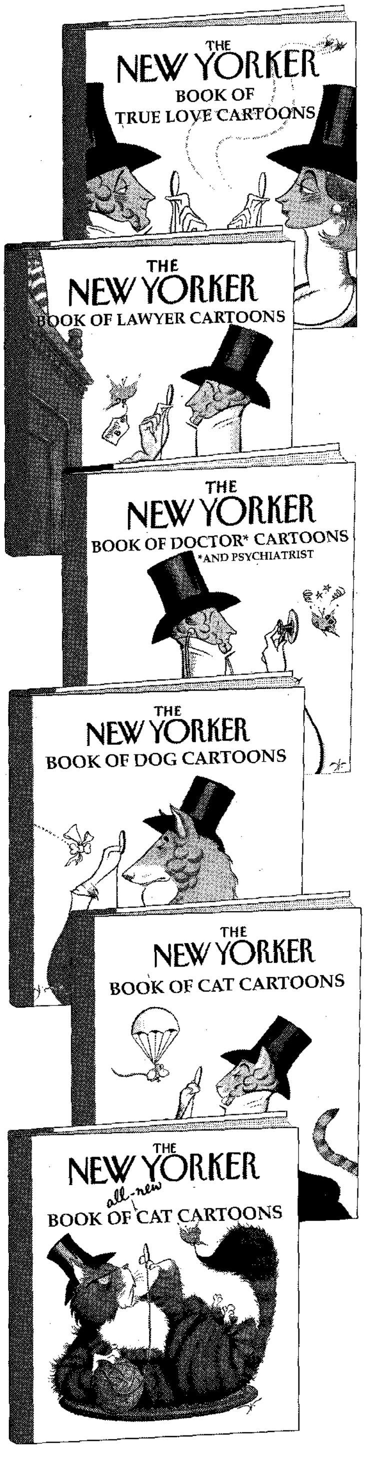
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writing about Big Daddy. (And when he writes about Mahler he is not showing off there, either. Everybody had just discovered Mahler, with Leonard Bernstein leading the band.) And what accomplishment! In passing, Mary Jarrell mentions that Wilbur's translations of Molière, Lowell's of Racine, Fitzgerald's of Homer, and Jarrell's of Goethe were all being done during the same short period in the early sixties.

Jarrell was a prince of that good time. He looked the part, for one thing. Poets and philosophers in the beginning depend on their glamour to sort them out from the pack, just as actresses depend on their intelligence (there are lots of pretty girls), and Jarrell had plenty of glamour. High forehead, full beard, twinkling eye—if John Huston had made a biopic of Walt Whitman he would have cast Jarrell. (Jack Kerouac, who squatted at Jarrell's house for a while—American literature was small enough so that even the two extremes slept on the same couch—said that he looked like a kindly Jesuit; Mary von J. says that he looked like Chekhov, and cultivated it; Hannah Arendt thought he looked like Rilke.) There is a wonderful Elliot Erwitt portrait of him, a gypsy-gentleman, doing the soft-shoe in perfect Lobb shoes while dancing with his topcoat—it must be the Savile Row one—in Manhattan in the spring of 1961, which summons up the effervescence of the time as beautifully as anything outside of Salinger, or Dave Brubeck.

AT this point, the story ought to take a darker turn, but, in fact, it takes an interestingly sentimental one. By the sixties, Jarrell had adopted the much plainer and more emotionally direct manner that culminated in his final, and by far his best, book of poems, "The Lost World." The great critic became a great poet. The tight web of allusions dropped away, and what was left was mostly straightforward, sad, and essentially simple. In "The Lost Children," a woman contemplates old pictures of her two daughters, one dead, the other alive but gone, too, into her own life as a woman; in another poem, a woman goes shopping at the supermarket and recalls how sexually desirable she once was; in another, a middle-aged man recalls seeing the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion. They all think not Change me! but Where was I when it happened? Where does the time go? the poems say, unagitated by suicide or madness or any of the other stage properties with which the Romantics, from Shelley to Plath, have tried to decorate this sadness.

Jarrell wasn't just writing from life in these poems. He was also, in an unpretentious way, working through the logic of his view of the dead end of modern poetry. He argued that Romanticism, pushed to the edge of its own logic, had produced Modernism—they were the same thing in different hats—and that now Modernism, pushed to its edge, had become sentimental in a new way, endlessly celebrating violence of all kinds, real and emotional. Modernist poetry had become an abstract form, while the actual material of human experience was neglected, marginalized, or condemned as sentimental. "Modernist poetry," he wrote, "exerted its attraction because it was carrying the tendencies of romanticism to their necessary conclusions; now most of those conclusions have been arrived at; and how can the poet go any further? How can poems be written that are more violent? More disorganized? More obscure? More—the adjectives throng to me—than those that have already been written?"

He saw, too, that taking up the forbidden subject—the commonplace emotions without which the tragic had no weight—could become a form of middlebrow comfort, and ready you for the *Reader's Digest*. How do you save love for clear speech? How do you write truly about daily loss without becoming part of the tear-jerking industry? In this sense, Jarrell did not merely risk sentimentality. He chose it as a subject. And it is one of the great subjects, which his enemies tend to land on and his admirers tend to evade.

Jarrell forces us to ask what we really mean when we talk about sentimentality—what should we mean? Dishonesty about emotion seems like a good start, or R. H. Blyth's giving a thing more tenderness than God gives it, or, in a Hofmannsthal quote that Jarrell loved, a "specific way of overemphasizing strata of emotion . . . [exaggerating] not the feeling of love but that of the self." By that standard, it's hard to find anything truly sentimental in Jarrell's exact, unsparing rendition of feelings of loss and the compensating search for daily pleasure. Romantic rhetoric tells us to live in the moment and to embrace change. But, since there is no one moment to live in, the advice becomes contradictory—to love the moment is to want to keep it. Lowell, the tragic romantic, on being asked what made him so blue, would have said, "People die." Jarrell, the sentimental classicist, had he been asked the same thing, would have said, "Time passes." The second, though less grand, is truer, and contains the first, which is what colors our days, shadows even the sunshine. If Jarrell is sentimental, then most lived experience is sentimental. The real test of sentimentality isn't tears but truth. When Chaplin goes to save the small boy from the orphanage in "The Kid," it isn't a coercive lie, merely a dramatized fact: we would all run across roofs to save our children, if there were roofs to run on and they would hold us up.

In his sentimentality, as in much else, Jarrell's only contemporary was Salinger, who was also a humorist by first impulse, and also concerned primarily with recuperating true feeling through innocent speech. When Esme saves the Sergeant or when Zooey saves Franny, it is by speaking tenderly and precisely about ordinary loves. That's what Jarrell did, too. Reading Mary Jarrell's rhapsodic, intently detailed memoir of her dream poet, one is put irresistibly in mind of "Seymour: An Introduction" and Salinger's intently detailed memoir of his creation, where we learn, too, how the perfect modern American poet shaves, walks, plays tennis, runs to buy Louis Sherry ice cream. I have often thought, half seriously, that Jarrell might have been the original of Seymour, or at any rate one of the forces breathing on his creation. There is the same precocity, the same twinkling generosity, the same overearnest spirituality that never quite coalesces into religion. Even the subjects of Seymour's poems as Buddy Glass describes them for us—a little girl who turns her doll's head toward the poet on an airplane, the young widower whose hand is bitten by his cat—sound like Jarrell. Some of this is the shared period, but not all. (You couldn't say it of Lowell, for instance.) Even Buddy's lovely distinction that his brother's poems were not light- but high-hearted seems made for Jarrell.

In the end, Seymour couldn't take the world and chose to leave it. Did Jarrell? There is enough ambiguity about the circumstances of his death to make it an argument, and the life matters enough to make the argument matter. In brief: Jarrell fell into a deep depression in 1964—set off, in some part, by the death of Kennedy, whom he saw more rosily than that jaunty cynic may have deserved—recovered, and then read that miserable review in the *Times Book Review* of "The Lost World." (It accused him, of course, of "bourgeois sentimentality.") He slashed his wrist, and then seems to have recovered from his depression; he was getting treatment for his wrist, not for his head, when he walked into the path of the car that fatal day. Mary Jarrell makes a credible case that Jarrell's death was an accident—he was sideswiped, a curious choice for a deliberate end—and we would like to believe her. Jarrell's poetry, like Seymour's, implies ways of going on, and his inability to carry on himself makes us doubt the faith he gives us.

It is ironic that a supposedly tough critic would collapse from a tough review, but Jarrell wasn't really tough, just intense. (The people who can really take it never dish it out, because they don't notice anybody else in the room.) He left no school, no overt Jarrellites behind, as there are Greenbergians and Kaelites. Only secret ones, who pretend to be like him. This is a blessing, criticism being not a slot machine of judgment but a tone of voice, a style, the promise of a whole view of life in a few pregnant sentences. Jarrell is everywhere, having been, through means invisible and direct, the creator of the best tone of American amateur criticism. And if criticism seems too small a form to contain a whole view of the world, let the celestial navigator speak one last time:

> People love cars. Looking at them driving off fast in every direction, a Thoreau or an Emerson might ask: "From what are they all escaping?" The answer is themselves: If only they'd stayed home and cultivated those selves they wouldn't need to escape from them. "It is because our own eyes are so dull that the chromium on our cars shines so," the Thoreau or Emerson would continue. All this is one of those demeaning truths to which we say, "It's so. It's so," and walk away muttering, "Thank God something shines." ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

ENGLAND, ENGLAND, by Julian Barnes (Knopf; $23). A clever entertainment about clever entertainments, this tale of a theme-park England created on the Isle of Wight by a hateful entrepreneur—complete with fake Stonehenge and half-size Buckingham Palace—does not disappoint. But it is deepened by the story of Martha Cochrane, an overachiever employed to be the project's official naysayer. Both personally and professionally, Martha is devoted to searching for the authentic: for the missing jigsaw piece that disappeared in her father's pocket when he abandoned her family; for the missing piece in her love for a shy fellow-executive; and for the missing ingredient in success. Her meditations are worth any number of clever entertainments.

LAYOVER, by Lisa Zeidner (Random House; $24). Claire Newbold is forty-one, a surgeon's wife and a saleswoman of medical equipment. Following the death of her son, however, she's no longer a mother, and "a mother might be the only person ever called out for, in the middle of the night, in a way that matters." After her husband confesses an infidelity, Newbold escapes into the anonymity of hotels she's previously visited on business trips; rarely registering for a room, she flits from place to place, charming the housekeepers and evading hotel security. She luxuriates in her new freedom—to reinvent herself, to leave without paying the check, to have sex with strangers, and, finally, to decide when it's time to go home. Zeidner's writing is like her heroine: taut, intelligent, and seductive.

TIMBUKTU, by Paul Auster (Holt; $22). A forbearing mutt spends the first half of this compact story by his dying mentor—a schizophrenic, often homeless would-be poet—and the second looking for a new love and keeper. It's impossible not to be moved by the plight of an innocent, especially one who is unconditionally loving in a way that humans aspire to be but never seem to manage. On the other hand, the novel lapses into cuteness: the poet, a son of Holocaust survivors, is named Willy G. Christmas, and he channels Santa Claus. Auster seems to be channelling Lars Eighner, whose memoir, "Travels with Lizbeth," covered similar ground.

VILLAGE OF A MILLION SPIRITS, by Ian MacMillan (Steerforth; $24). In August, 1943, prisoners in Treblinka set the death camp afire and fled into the forest. Hundreds escaped; fewer than fifty survived. MacMillan's fictionalization of the uprising includes the perspectives not only of Jews and Nazis but also of the camp's Ukrainian guards and the Poles who lived in the surrounding countryside. Treblinka was intended to be a graveyard hidden from history, and MacMillan is well aware that his novel owes a responsibility to those who died there; he never allows his characters to fade into symbols but instead describes their brutal fates with unblinking particularity and precision.

THE CURRENT CINEMA

BLOWN AWAY

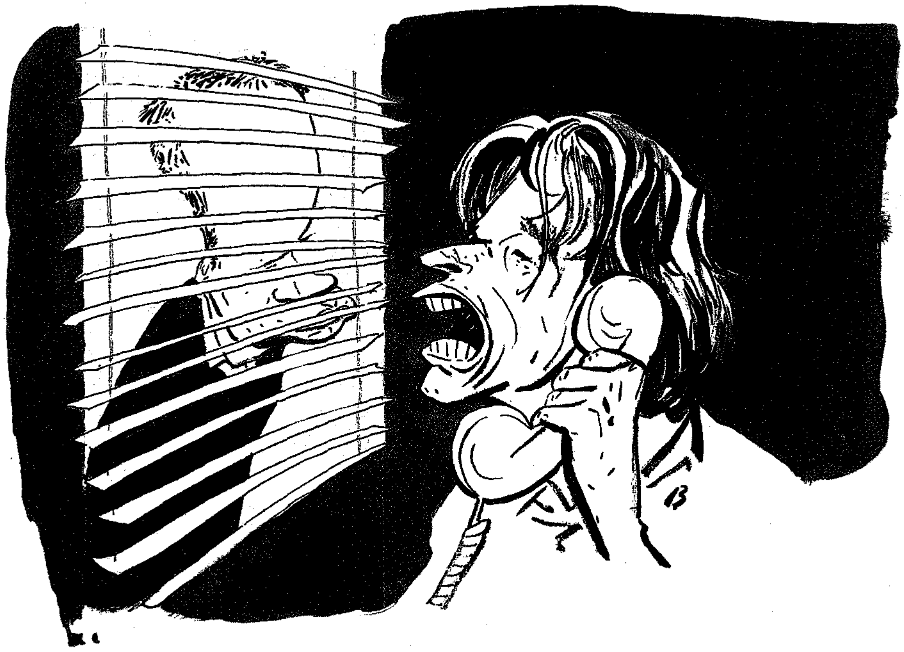
Terrorists in the neighborhood, and lovers on the Pont-Neuf.

BY ANTHONY LANE

IF you had to summarize the casting of "Arlington Road," you would say that Jeff Bridges plays the good guy and Tim Robbins plays the villain. This is roughly true: Bridges is Michael Faraday, a widower who lives in Virginia and lectures on terrorism in Washington, while Robbins is his friendly neighbor, Oliver Lang, who stores beneath his bonhomie that toxic dose of menace without which no cinematic suburb can ever be complete. It is a tribute to Mark Pellington's movie, however, that you wonder how things would have looked if the two stars had swapped roles; Robbins does something squinty with his eyes, and uses his height to peer down at other men like a bird inspecting carrion, while Bridges keeps scraping his hand through his hair and swallowing his words, as if he were being forced to confess unpalatable truths. All in all, Arlington Road is a desirable residential location with easy access to hell.

The film begins on the road itself, with Lang's young son wandering along dripping blood, his arm blasted and blackened by a fireworks accident. Faraday finds him and drives him to the hospital, thus kicking off the action with some climatic high-speed driving; the opening fifteen minutes, in fact, are a horrendous daze, as Pellington and his writer, Ehren Kruger, invite us into a world that seems wholly recognizable—families on quiet streets, worried about the safety of the kids—and then deny us the chance to get a handle on it. Faraday is ashamed that it took a disaster for him to meet the Langs: "Two months they've lived there—I haven't said a single word to them," he tells his girlfriend, Brooke (Hope Davis). That is really the subject of this picture: the unguarded border where privacy crosses over into secrecy. Oliver Lang and his wife, Cheryl (Joan Cusack), intone the mantras of a conservative existence: "Our house is your house," and, even more ominous, "We're here for you, we really are." They really are.

Faraday has a son himself; together, they are still in mourning for Michael's wife, an F.B.I. agent who was slain in the line of duty. At one point, Faraday takes his students on a *field trip* to visit the site of the killing. This struck me as nine parts therapy to one part history lesson, and it signals the problem that gathers steam as "Arlington Road" proceeds: as if in deference to a story full of explosions, Pellington can't resist blowing everything up. What should be footnotes grow into banner headlines; minor coincidences creak and stretch to the point of gross implausibility. Faraday's own mantras are the stock exclamations of the horror flick ("There's something not right"), and he duly starts to investigate the buried life of the Langs. It sounds crazy, folks, but it seems the expert on terrorism is best friends with—you guessed it—a couple of terrorists! I came out of "Arlington Road" cursing the plot; I have no wish to give away the ending, but, to those of you who see the film, I would simply ask, "How could they be sure he would make it into the garage?" More reflective souls will find themselves oddly drawn to the nonsense; the proper question may be "Did the Langs plan the whole thing from the beginning?," in which case the gaping lack of logic recedes a little, allowing a more serious air of dread to seep and writhe into the foreground of the tale. There is a respectable sprinkling of shocks, as the Langs perfect their talent for popping up at inconvenient moments; Joan Cusack's smile is the scariest sight in the film.



Where privacy crosses over into secrecy: Robbins and Bridges in "Arlington Road."

STEVE BRODNER

What Pellington wants to do is hook these frights up to a wider network of premonition: Faraday shows images of the Oklahoma bombing to his class (though it is politely shifted to St. Louis), and you half-believe in his feverish need to probe that wound in the body politic. We also see a sketch of the Unabomber; the irony is, of course, that the Unabomber turned out to be little more than a math degree in a hut, and you could hardly make out the face of evil because the beard of evil kept getting in the way. By that standard, Lang is a smooth Hollywood creation—a sophisticated anarchist who has decided to vaporize the system from within. He springs more from an aesthetic tradition, I suspect, than from political fact, and, when we briefly see his co-conspirators, they all appear to have been bused in from Stepford. You may applaud Lang's cunning, and you have to respect Pellington's attempt to wrestle with the devil of homegrown American terrorism, but, if movies are going to reach even halfway to the darkness of Oklahoma, they will have to travel down paths considerably rougher and less civilized than Arlington Road.

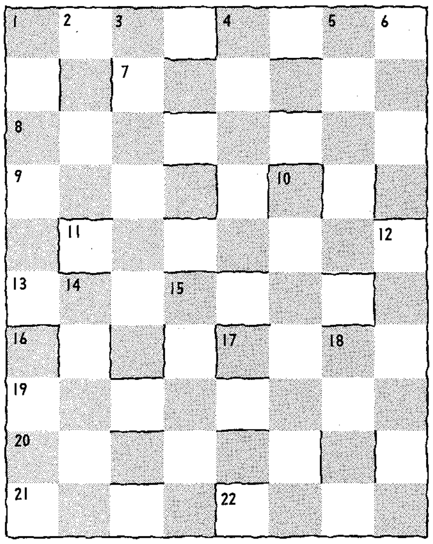
The French director Leos Carax once made a movie entitled "Boy Meets Girl," and that uncomplicated formula has served him well. In "The Lovers on the Bridge," the boy is Alex (Denis Lavant), the girl is Michèle (Juliette Binoche), and they meet on the Pont-Neuf, the oldest bridge in Paris. Theirs is a momentous encounter, for these are loyal members of the dispossessed; both parties are clad in rags and rimed with filth, and the only notable distinction between them is that Alex takes drugs, whereas Michèle is going blind. One eye, ruined by a rare ailment, is already patched with a Band-Aid, while the other is starting to bulge and glaze—"like a snail," as she picturesquely puts it. Michèle used to be a painter, and still carries her portfolio with her (the drawings are by Binoche herself), but when she puts pencil to paper her good eye tends to leak and smart, as if seeing afresh were beyond her.

In sympathy with her suffering, "The Lovers on the Bridge" is itself a most painful film to watch. It begins with Alex stumbling along a boulevard and rubbing his forehead against the asphalt, to cure some nameless ache, and even his growing affection for Michèle is jagged with jealousy: he makes sure that she loses a box of stolen banknotes and, with it, her chance to escape. Carax, like his hero, can hardly bear to tear himself away from the bridge, and such mad possessiveness puts him squarely in line with earlier addicts of the city—think of Marcel Carné and "Hôtel du Nord." There is a murmur of Carné in the slowed-down shot of a stone cast by Alex and skipping along the surface of the Seine; each time it kisses the water you hear him whisper the word "Michèle." The plot may be sedentary, but the camera assaults the world, or broods over it with a restless avidity; I'm not sure I've ever seen a movie that travels quite so far. The early scenes resemble a documentary, as Alex is rounded up and deposited in a shelter for the homeless, stacked with human flotsam. The fallen faces have a pinch of Goya to them, and you can feel Carax dicing with the same kinds of questions that the painter probed: How can a sophisticated technique be coarsened to preserve the reek of the untamed? And how can one make popular art out of the plight of forsaken people? Ninety minutes later, however, we seem to have sailed into Busby Berkeley territory, with a gleeful Michèle waterskiing down the river at night, lit only by a thousand foaming fireworks. This is probably the most beautiful sequence in modern French cinema, and it's all the more winning because it depicts a crime. It is the night of July 14, 1989, and, along with the rest of France, Alex and Michèle are enjoying the bicentennial of the Revolution: they have knocked out a policeman and stolen his boat. In a way, they have revived the soul of the sansculottes; with its impish grandiloquence, Michèle's one-woman parade is proof of *liberté.*

Yet on being handed this vote of confidence the French public was loath to accept it. "The Lovers on the Bridge" first came out in 1991, after gargantuan problems with the shoot: Lavant was injured on the set, the production fell behind schedule, and Carax had to build a full-sized mockup of the Pont-Neuf almost five hundred miles away, near Montpellier, complete with all the waterfront façades. This strikes me as laudably fanatical, but it was easily read as megalomaniacal, and by the time the movie hit the screens it was being targeted as the Gallic answer to "Heaven's Gate." That slander was unjustified, but it stuck like mud to the project, and "The Lovers on the Bridge" has taken eight years to arrive on these shores; Miramax is to be congratulated on summoning the mettle to release it. Carax, whose latest work—"Pola X," an adaptation of Melville's "Pierre"—was shown this year at Cannes to near-unanimous disdain, is plainly one of those artists who need to risk extravagant failure in order to give themselves the occasional shot at success. That "The Lovers on the Bridge" now strikes me as an unconvincing study in character does not mean that it fails as a love story; on the contrary, it shows that love can be brandished and certified by the incandescence of images alone. Alex, stripped to the waist, takes gulps of alcohol and breathes fire for an admiring crowd, none more admiring than Michèle; his passionate recklessness, like that of the whole movie, is a sight for sore eyes. ◆

8 x 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 96 BY TODD McCLARY



ACROSS

1 Barroom features dances with noisy shoes (4)
4 Ultimately, Howard Stern is goofy (4)
7 Heavenly light or penetrating glow (6)
8 Gold adds interest to financial support (8)
9 Face away from marble entranceway (4)
11 Unfavorable jingle? (7)
13 Soundly advise administration (7)
17 In gym class, train soccer great (4)
19 Wonderful editor of "Mad" (2,3,3)
20 Separate selection from Denis Leary (6)
21 Simple space station broadcast (4)
22 Whirl headless stuffed animal (4)

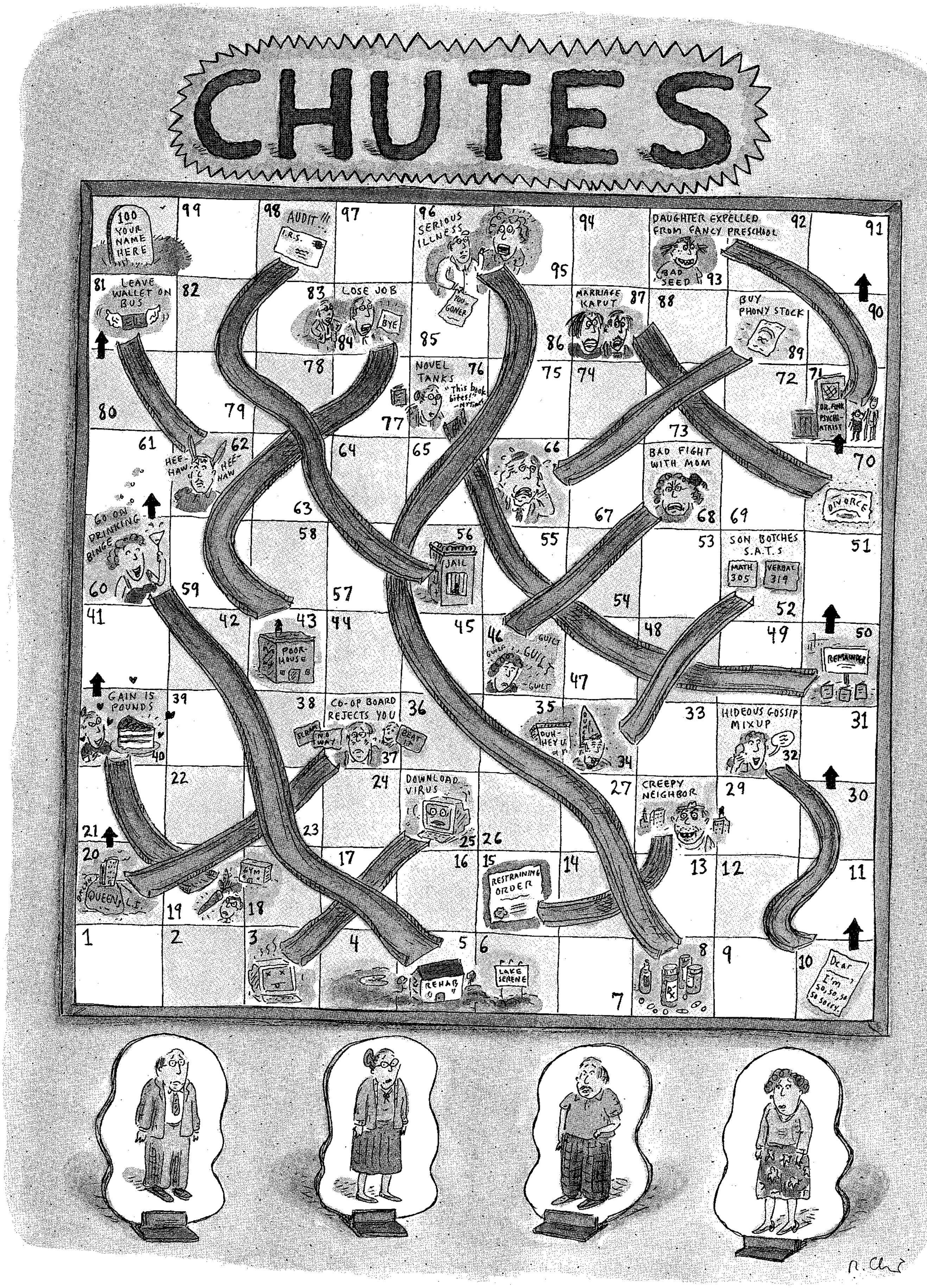
DOWN

1 Unfortunate bit of testimony brought up cigar (6)
2 Ocean's color amid seaquake (4)
3 Late breaking updates (4,3)
4 Verdi lost enthusiasm (5)
5 Rubs fingerboard ridges (5)
6 Indication of disapproval surrounding a job (4)
10 Instructed French cheese agent (7)
12 Might mix green with touch of yellow (6)
14 Location of Emerald City character's sunblock? (5)
15 Honker taking interstate creates disturbance (5)
16 I matched up article (4)
18 Transfer data disk kept by youngster (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 95 appears on page 41. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

THE BACK PAGE BY ROZ CHAST


CHUTES
100 YOUR NAME HERE
AUDIT!!! I.R.S.
96 SERIOUS ILLNESS
YOU-GONER
DAUGHTER EXPELLED FROM FANCY PRESCHOOL
BAD SEED
81 LEAVE WALLET ON BUS
83 LOSE JOB
BYE
MARRIAGE KAPUT 87
BUY PHONY STOCK
NOVEL TANKS 76
"This book bites!" —NY Times
DR. FINK PSYCHIATRIST
HEE-HAW
HEE-HAW
BAD FIGHT WITH MOM
DIVORCE
GO ON DRINKING BINGE
JAIL
SON BOTCHES S.A.T.S
MATH 305
VERBAL 319
POORHOUSE
GUILT
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GUILT
GUILT
REMAINDER
GAIN 15 POUNDS
CO-OP BOARD REJECTS YOU
SCRAM
NO WAY
BEAT IT
DUH-HEY U
HIDEOUS GOSSIP MIXUP
DOWNLOAD VIRUS
CREEPY NEIGHBOR
QUEENS, L.I.
GYM
RESTRAINING ORDER
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Dear I'm so, so, so so sorry.
R. Chast

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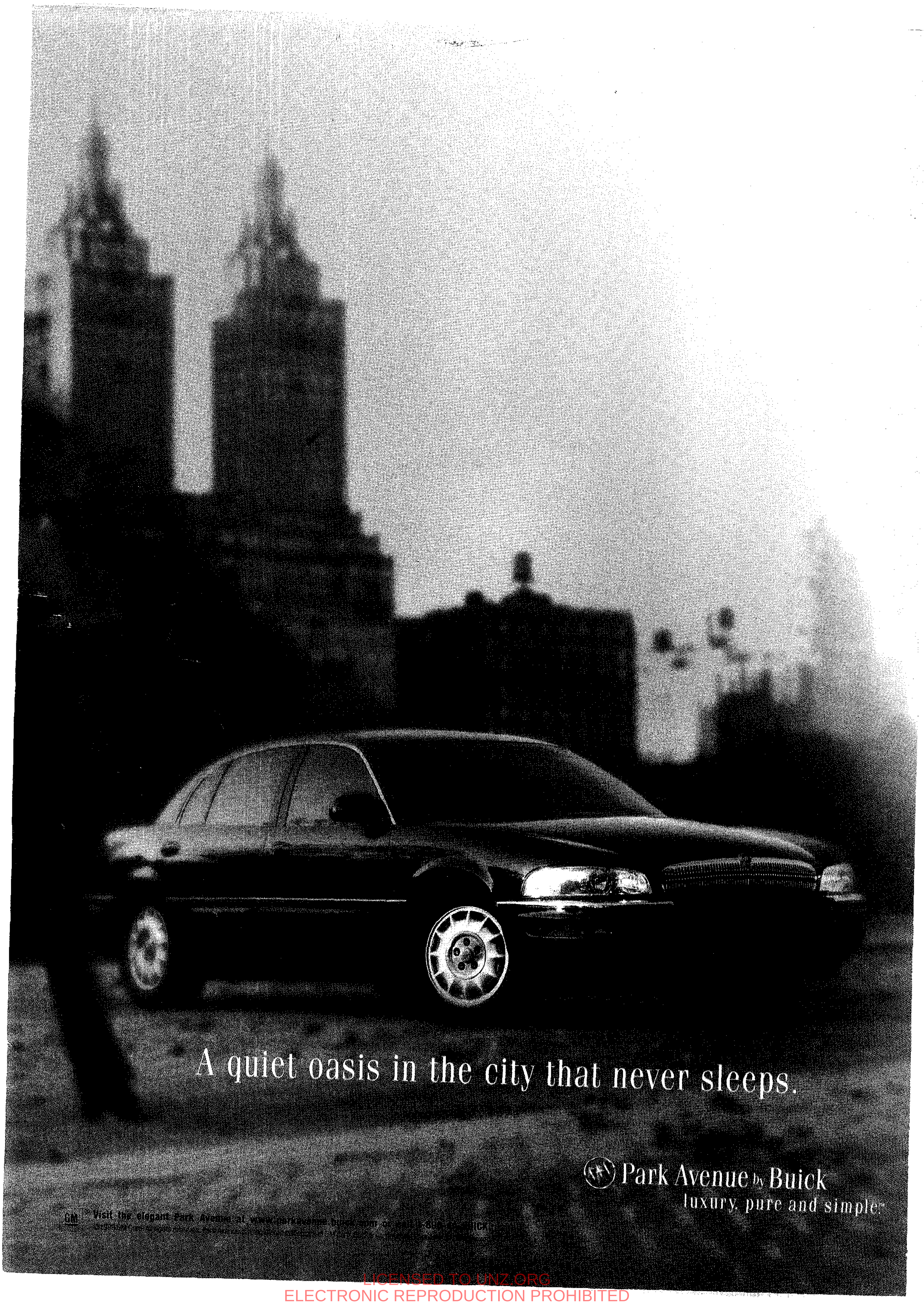
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